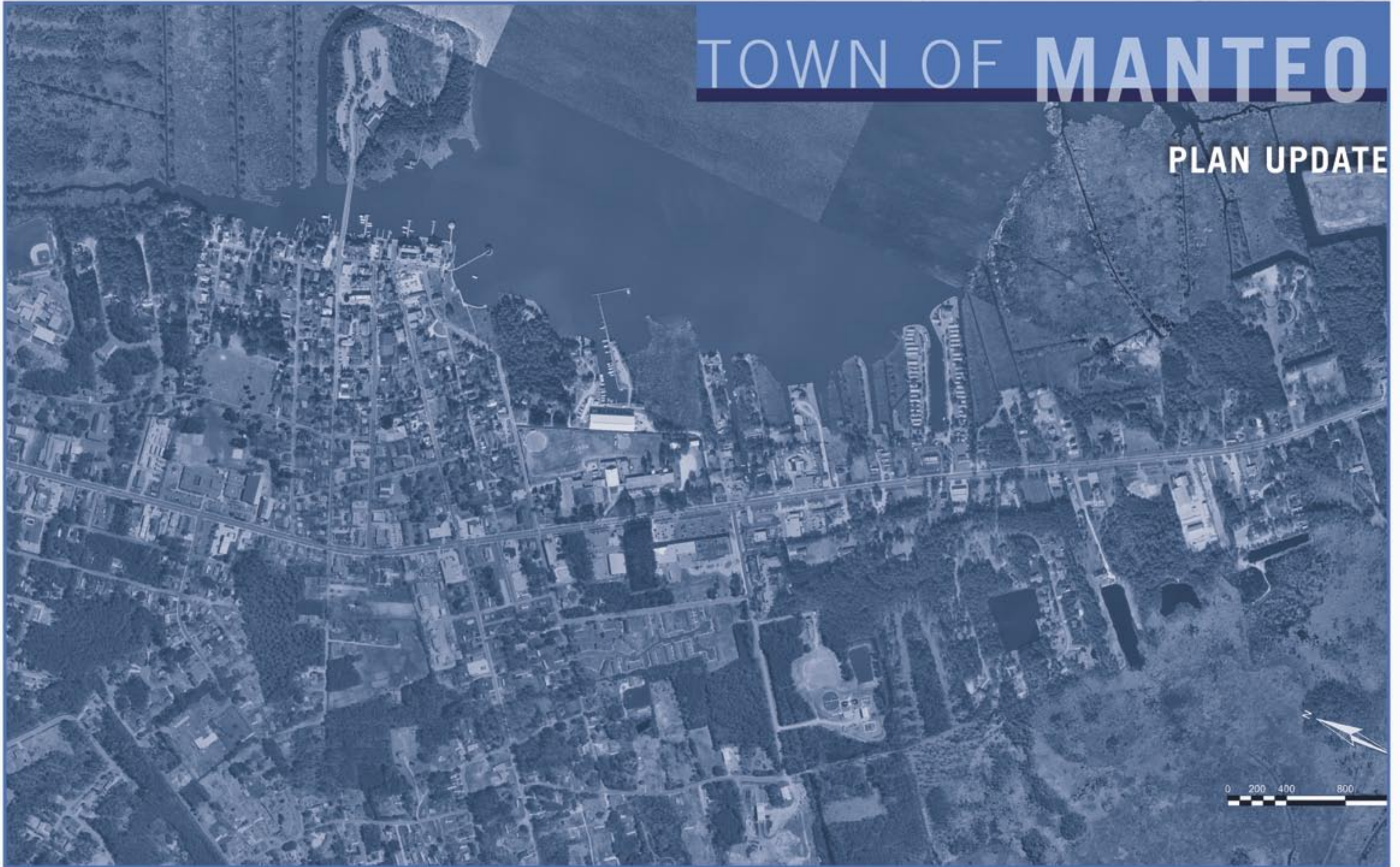


TOWN OF MANTEO

PLAN UPDATE





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE TOWN OF MANTEO 2003-2005**

- John Wilson, Mayor
- Dellerva Collins, Mayor Pro Tem
- Lawrence Belli, Commissioner
- H. A. Creef, Commissioner
- Edward Etheridge, Commissioner
- David Farrow, Commissioner
- Lee Tugwell, Commissioner

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FOR THE TOWN OF MANTEO 2001-2003**

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- Susan Fearing
- Suzanne Godley
- Joe Jordan
- Melody Leckie
- Michael McOwen
- Norma Mills
- Sybil Ross
- Betty Selby
- Bob Woody

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- Roanoke Island Festival Park, Deloris Harrell, Executive Director
- Ft. Raleigh National Park, Larry Belli, Superintendent
- College of the Albemarle, Theresa James, Dare County Campus
- Dare County Arts Council, George Wood
- N.C. Aquarium, Dave Griffin, Director
- Carolina Environmental Program, William Scott
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- Mina Emamifar – Maritime Village
- Vasilia Ganiaris – Waterfront improvements
- Sevanne Person – Wayfinding and signage
- John Robbins, Jr. – Downtown Manteo improvements
- Michael Sweitzer – Main Highway (US 64) improvements and commercial redevelopment
- Jesse Turner - Salty Dawg” housing project
- Annette Whitehurst – West side improvements
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INTRODUCTION

PREVIOUS PLANS

Although colonization occurred first in 1584, it was not until the 1700s that a permanent settlement came into being on Roanoke Island. Growth was slow and was set back a number of times by fires that destroyed large parts of downtown Manteo, including three such fires in the twentieth century. During the Civil War, Roanoke Island was occupied early by Union forces blockading ports in Virginia, and it became a Freedmen’s colony between 1862 and 1868. With Reconstruction, land reverted to its earlier owners, though many of the African-American families on the Island remained and their descendents may be found there to this day. Both minority and majority populations share a number of family names including such well-known names as Midgett and Etheridge, attesting to the long history of interrelationships.

With the opening of the first land route to Roanoke Island in the 1930s, a direct route to Virginia and the north became available, and the popularity of both Roanoke Island and the Outer Banks for vacationing grew rapidly. Roanoke Island did not connect to the mainland until the opening of the bridge in 1957.

Today’s Manteo shows a number of traces of this history. About 60 buildings are eligible for the National Register of



Historic Buildings, and two proposals for historic districts have been developed for submission.

THE 1982 PLAN

In 1981, anticipating the imminent arrival of the four hundredth anniversary of English settlement in America, Manteo became concerned that it was unprepared. It had suffered a steady economic decline for many years, and had achieved the dubious distinction of having the highest property taxes in the state.

The 1982 plan was prepared by Professor Randy Hester, based on the work of a group of students from North Carolina State University who spent an entire year working in Manteo. It provided a clear direction for the revitalization of Manteo and included a number of projects spread over a 20-year period to assist that town to achieve its goals. Manteo, perhaps uniquely in the history of planning, took this list of projects to heart and set about accomplishing them as proposed. At the end of 20 years, almost all of the suggested projects had been implemented. As



a result, the town achieved a major turnaround. Its fiscal condition was sound, its taxes were below state averages, many buildings had been renovated and restored, and a new attraction at Festival Park had been created. There was new commercial construction, and an affordable housing project had been developed. The town was drawing 5,000 visitors a day during the summer.

As noted above, the town has accomplished the almost unique feat of breaking the 1982 Plan into individual tasks and then systemati-

cally implementing them. Nearly every single proposal was turned into reality, from the revitalization of the waterfront to the creation of Festival Park, the construction of the Elizabeth II, and the construction of a cluster of affordable housing units for seniors. Few public bodies can claim such a thorough and complete implementation. This level of effort is a testament to the effectiveness of the interactive plan development process as well as to the determination and consistency of purpose of the Board of Commissioners and the support they have from the public.

Using the plan, the town was able to bring itself back from the brink of insolvency and in the process transform itself into its present status as one of the more livable communities in North Carolina, in addition to becoming a popular tourist and vacation destination.

NEED FOR UPDATE

With the success of the plan have come growing pains, including threats to the quaint character of the town from large-scale development, traffic and parking problems, and questions about future expansion of municipal services. Continued growth has put pressure on the environment



and on land prices. The town also feels the impact of the substantial development of the Dare County beach communities, including a huge rise in the number of students in the Manteo schools who are bused in daily.

The town is currently governed by a traditional zoning ordinance that no longer meets the needs of the town. This traditional form of zoning, which is based on a rigidly interpreted system of entitlements, has several weaknesses, including poor adaptation to changing needs and a lack of flexibility in the development of mixed uses. It has also permitted the building of the strip commercial zone along the Main Highway that has become the source of much complaint.

The town asked for a plan that encourages an active dialogue between the Board of Commissioners, town staff, residents, and developers seeking to make use of the remaining larger undeveloped parts of the town.

Further, the plan should provide guidance for upgrading the existing commercial areas on the Main Highway and downtown that are at present neither attractive nor efficient.

Aerial view of Manteo and Festival Island Photo: B. Parker

PARTNERS IN PLANNING

In early 2002, North Carolina State University College of Design's Office of Research, Extension and Engagement was asked by the Town of Manteo to assist in updating a plan that had been prepared by an earlier generation of faculty and students. A team from the college, including Dean Marvin Malecha and four members of the faculty visited Manteo in April of that year, meeting with a number of public officials. Following the elections of November 2002, the Board of Commissioners authorized the town to enter into a contract with the college for preparation of a plan update.

Town Commissioners asked the college to provide ideas through a repeat of the class studio approach, including a sustained integration of the students into the community during an extended period of residence. While this had to be modified from the model used in the earlier plan, it nonetheless formed the basis for developing the approach to the project, which included bringing the team to Manteo for eight three-day group visits plus numerous individual trips. The work of the students was to be supplemented by a planning document to be prepared by the team of David Stein and Achva Benzinberg Stein, which would form the foundation for an updated zoning ordinance designed to preserve Manteo's small-town character while at the same time accommodating changes acceptable to the town.

This plan is the outcome of that semester long project. The class consisted of eight graduate and undergraduate

students in landscape architecture who spent three days every two weeks in the town meeting with officials, citizens and interested individuals living outside the town limits. This also includes concepts developed by a class of second-year undergraduate students who took on a shorter-term project to design the neighborhood around the intersection of Sir Walter Raleigh and Biddeford streets, where the present Community Center is located, as well as the park commemorating the first A.M.E. Zion Church on Roanoke Island. The students became deeply familiar with both the physical and social settings of Manteo and developed ideas to respond to the problems that were identified through both the survey and the conversations with the steering committee and members of the public. These ideas were presented to the public on several occasions and form the basis of the recommendations for the physical improvements included in the plan.

This plan update was carried out in three parts. The first part was a student studio project in the Department of Landscape Architecture, with seven graduate and two undergraduate students. In the second part, Prof. Achva Benzinberg Stein, chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at N.C. State University (who also taught the studio), and David Stein, planning specialist with the College of Design's Office of Research, Extension and Engagement, using materials developed by the students together with additional proposals generated in discussions with members of the Steering Committee, prepared





Town Hall, Manteo

the present document. Finally, working jointly with staff of the North Carolina Department of Commerce’s Division of Community Affairs, the plan has been converted into a proposed zoning ordinance designed to implement the concepts developed in the plan itself.

PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

The process began with an intensive period of interaction with the local community, using both a survey of residents and detailed interviews with residents selected for their ability to represent a wide range of interests. It was followed by a series of design workshops and charrettes in which the students issued an open invitation to the townspeople to come to discuss and criticize their ideas and proposals.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A citizens’ Steering Committee was established to help guide the process. Students met with the group and with its members individually to gain greater insight into the issues. Additionally, each student worked directly with one member of the Board of Commissioners to assist the board in developing a clear understanding of the ideas and proposals that were being developed. Finally, the Commissioners designated Commissioner John Wilson and Planning Board chair Bill Parker to serve as liaisons with the group.

SURVEY

The survey, found in Appendix 1, consisted of eight pages with about 60 questions. Four hundred and five responses were received, of which 300 were from residents of the town, another 90 from residents of other parts of Roanoke Island,

and the remainder from persons who indicated an interest in the future of the town.

Special efforts were made to obtain minority and youth input into the plan, as the initial responses were heavily weighted toward the white, older and retired segments of the population.

The strongest and clearest statement of the survey is that Manteo’s residents are very proud of their small town, and overwhelmingly wish to keep it small and friendly. They desire the town to be accessible to its residents both in and out of season, and view as very important the preservation of the atmosphere of year round habitation with visitors rather than creating a tourist destination overwhelmed by traffic and tourism.

The team identified the following highlights and issues:

- **TRAFFIC.** Traffic on the Main Highway (US 64) consists of three, often conflicting, streams: local users going to work or school, and tourists going either to Manteo or to the beach. Conflicts at rush hour between the work traffic and school traffic appear during the school year and with summer tourist traffic during the season. The opening of the new bridge is seen to have reduced truck traffic on the highway, but the impact on automobile traffic is less clear. The anticipated opening in about two years of a new high school on the beach will reduce the impact of that group on the rush-hour problem, while the relocation of the middle school will move another source of congestion to just north of the town limit. NC DOT plans to realign the intersection and install a signal at the intersection with Mother Vineyard Road to alleviate some of the anticipated congestion.
- **PARKING.** Present parking is limited, and there is no provision for additional spaces or for remote parking to help with the tourist rush during the summer. Residents in particular feel that tourism conflicts with their desire to maintain the simple daily life of the small town.
- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** A majority of residents in each category, i.e. homeowners, apartment dwellers, condo owners and residents of mobile homes felt that “housing cost is a problem”. Even for owners of single family homes, nearly two-thirds of the respondents said



Main Highway, Manteo Photo: D. Stein

- housing affordability was a problem, while for renters it was the vast majority (85%). Anecdotal information suggests that housing costs contribute to a growing number of workers who commute from Tyrrell and Hyde counties, as much as an hour or more away.
- **LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE YOUTH OF THE TOWN.** Both through the survey and in discussions with residents, the problem of a lack of opportunity for youth was highlighted. This applied to both opportunities during school years for constructive activities and opportunities for meaningful employment in the years beyond their formal schooling. Housing costs, job availability, and the need to leave for higher education all contribute to an aging population.
- **INADEQUATE COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.** There were numerous suggestions that Manteo needed a larger variety of stores, notable among which were better food/grocery stores, a bakery, and clothing stores, especially for more affordable merchandise. Most of the respondents preferred smaller, locally owned businesses only, although there were also a small number who felt the need for a “big box” store, such as Target or Wal-Mart.

OTHER ISSUES

Other issues yielded less apparent agreement. Although a majority supported one side, there was a sizable group who felt differently about the following issues:

- **Business needs to grow,** though the amount is unclear. When asked, residents indicated a number of business types that were lacking, including better quality food stores, lower priced clothing stores,
- **Density should be reduced** from the present legal maximum to something closer to the highest existing density in town of about nine units per acre (as found in the units behind McDonald’s)
- **There were strong majorities in favor of both greater control over development and creating design guidelines** to help maintain the “Manteo style” of small, accessible structures and services.
- **Finally, a solid majority was in favor of raising the funds** needed to make improvements, although it is also clear that the town would need to specify what was being done with the funds before these plans would meet with approval.

In addition, Manteo exhibits a number of classic dilemmas associated with smaller towns in North Carolina:

- **A small town seeking additional economic development** but also desirous of limiting its growth in order to preserve its small-town qualities, as well as to reflect the reality of life on an island with limited development potential. Growth is seen as a two-edged sword – it brings opportunity, but at the same time puts pressures on available land, which in turn makes life harder for those on limited or fixed incomes.
- **An aging population with only limited opportunity** for young people to live or work. Housing prices are a major issue, as is the availability of full-time employment with adequate prospects and benefits.

Parking problems, Budleigh Street Photo: J. Turner



- A sense of ethnic division on the issues of opportunities for employment and the openness of the community. Despite a long history of accommodation, many in the African-American community continue to feel that they receive a smaller share of the benefits, that opportunities continue to be limited or closed, and that the majority population is indifferent or, in some cases, even hostile. Rising land values have encouraged “gentrification”, while the lack of affordable housing is pushing many people to commute from as far away as Hyde and Tyrrell counties.

VISITS TO MANTEO

The group made eight visits to the town during the semester. This time was spent in gathering information, viewing the sites

Community presentations and discussion Photo: S. Person



of the various projects, and meeting with town commissioners, members of the Steering Committee and interested persons. Several of the students also undertook individual trips on their own initiative to expand on the materials they had gathered.

Each of the students was assigned the task of personally interviewing and informing one member of the Board of Commissioners about his or her specific project, in order to assist the town commissioners in gaining a detailed knowledge of the project.

PRESENTATIONS

A first charrette was held in February 2003 to develop potential designs for the courtyard of the Waterfront Building. This gave the students the opportunity to explore the nature of “the Manteo Style”, and begin their involvement.

The second workshop was held in early April, when preliminary designs and concepts were explored. A second class, this one of undergraduates, held a separate workshop later in the month in the California neighborhood and took on the task of designing the area that included the current community center, the park and the vacant lot known as “Lucy’s Corner”.

Final concepts were then developed and presented on May 12 in the auditorium at Festival Park. More than 50 residents attended the presentation, which included all the projects from the graduate class and selected plans developed by the undergraduate group.

Following this presentation, the drawings prepared by the students were displayed in the Town Hall for more than three months. This encouraged other residents to provide additional comment and input into the final proposals.

RESPONSE

The plan, therefore, has attempted to respond to the issues and desires of the local population. Although there were differences of opinion on many of the subjects, we believe that this plan fairly represents the expressed concerns of the majority who participated in both the survey and the design process. We have taken these ideas and suggestions and translated them into proposed policies and conceptual designs for inclusion in this plan. These conceptual solutions represent possible answers to the issues raised, and are illustrative only. For final implementation, the town will need to first translate the plan into language in an updated zoning ordinance, and then call on the assistance of professionals (engineers, landscape architects, and architects) to finalize designs and plans for implementation for specific projects. This includes designs and construction documents for each of the projects developed by the students.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

POPULATION

Manteo’s population has grown slightly over the past decade. According to the U.S. Census, there were 1,052 residents of the town in 2000, up from 991 in 1990. Summer



population is estimated at approximately double this figure. Population and growth are limited by the small amount of land available within the town for additional development, as well as by economic conditions dictated by the small year-round population and the seasonality of much of the employment. Additional development on Roanoke Island is constrained by the small number of available sites that meet building standards due to both the nature of the soils and the lack of land above flood level.

HOUSING

Housing is in short supply, and the present market is witness to a rapid increase in prices as demand outstrips supply. This has particularly affected lower-income families, both working and retired, whose incomes have not kept up with the inflation in property values. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many persons holding seasonal

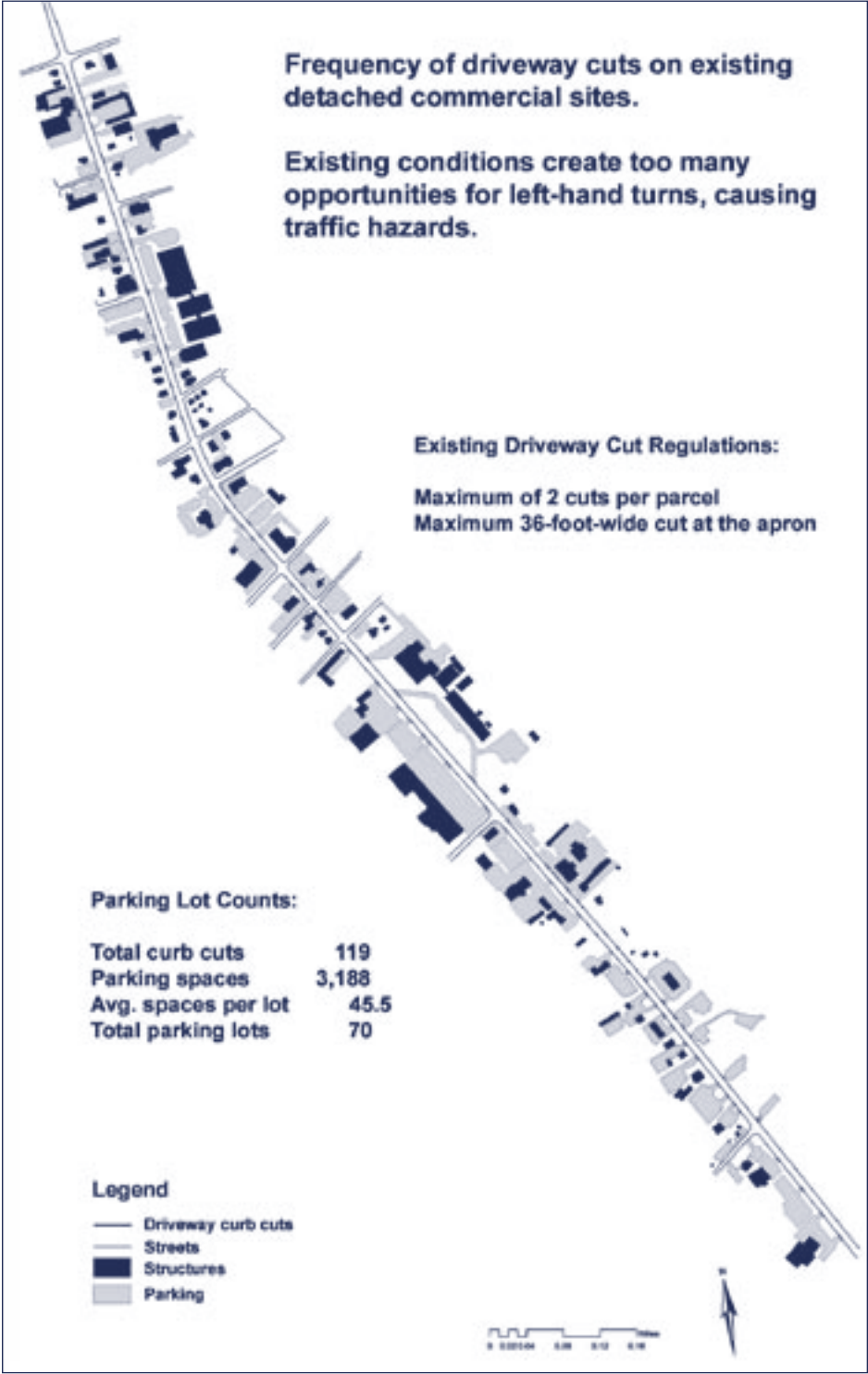
Mixed use development



Existing affordable housing Photo: D. Stein



and lower-wage jobs are now forced to commute from significant distances, including Tyrrell and Hyde counties. Little inexpensive housing is being built at present due to the lack of sites that meet building regulations. Manteo supplies water and sewer to all properties within town boundaries, but present policy is to limit new connections to sites within the town, or to make voluntary annexation a condition for a connection for sites outside the town. For



sites outside town limits, voluntary annexation is a prerequisite for connections. However, it is Town policy to limit such annexations to areas between the US 64 bypass on the south and the northern town limit on the north.

TRANSPORTATION

Given the small population and land area, Manteo is not currently a candidate for public transportation. The automobile will continue to be the mode of choice, although the town is also desirous of improving both pedestrian accessibility and the bicycle pathways. The present bike path along the Main Highway has not been completed to the new bridge and the visitors’ center, and the redesign of the roadway to calm the vehicular traffic offers an opportunity to complete the system.

TRAFFIC

Manteo is characterized by a limited street system that includes an incomplete grid system of roads parallel to the main spine along the Main Highway, which also serves as a major road for through traffic. The recent opening of the Virginia Dare Memorial Bridge between Manns Harbor and Nags Head on the Outer Banks has reduced through movements, particularly of trucks. N.C. Department of Transportation will recalibrate their traffic counts once the route becomes well established and traffic patterns adjust to the new route.

Access to Manteo is available both from the north end of Roanoke Island using the old US 64 bridge, or from the south by way of the intersection at Midway between old US 64 and the new bypass. The intersection at Midway has recently been expanded to accommodate the bridge traffic headed for the Outer Banks, but has also been the site of a number of serious accidents.

Traffic on the Main Highway through the town is the source of many complaints, in particular complaints about rush hour traffic during the school year. Since school and business traffic occur at the same time and are limited by the number of left turns that can be accommodated, back ups are common, and their number is increased by the excessive number of curb cuts along the highway, a legacy of unplanned development of the adjoining commercial properties. Downtown traffic has diminished since the Dare County Court was moved in 2002 to the new Dare County Justice Center at Midway, but the lack of parking for commercial deliveries causes tie-ups when trucks double park on narrow streets. Pedestrian-vehicle conflicts are also numerous, as crossing areas are poorly marked or not observed, while many drivers unfamiliar with the area take up space looking for parking or specific locations. A recent study by the N.C. Department of Transportation suggests that for the most part there is sufficient parking, though there are times when specific locations are considered “at capacity”.

The Roanoke Island Commission proposes a water taxi service between the Manteo waterfront and land they have acquired at the foot of Currituck Bridge.

While the majority of the streets in town meet the criteria for being pedestrian friendly (sidewalks, limited width, short blocks), the Main Highway corridor has developed as a typical highway corridor. While speeds are limited to 35 mph. in town, and 45 mph between the town limits and Midway, blocks are long, lights have lengthy cycles, there are many curb cuts inviting sharp turns, and sidewalks do not exist for much of its length on the west side of the road

Aerial photo of downtown Manteo Photo: B. Parker



on the presumption that this is an auto-oriented district.

With the proposed move of the College of the Albemarle to the middle school site, foot traffic will increase substantially.

Manteo currently has no major chain or “big box stores”, which are considered out of character with the town. A recent proposal to build a major supermarket was the proximate cause for an amendment to the present zoning regulation prohibiting large projects under a single roof.

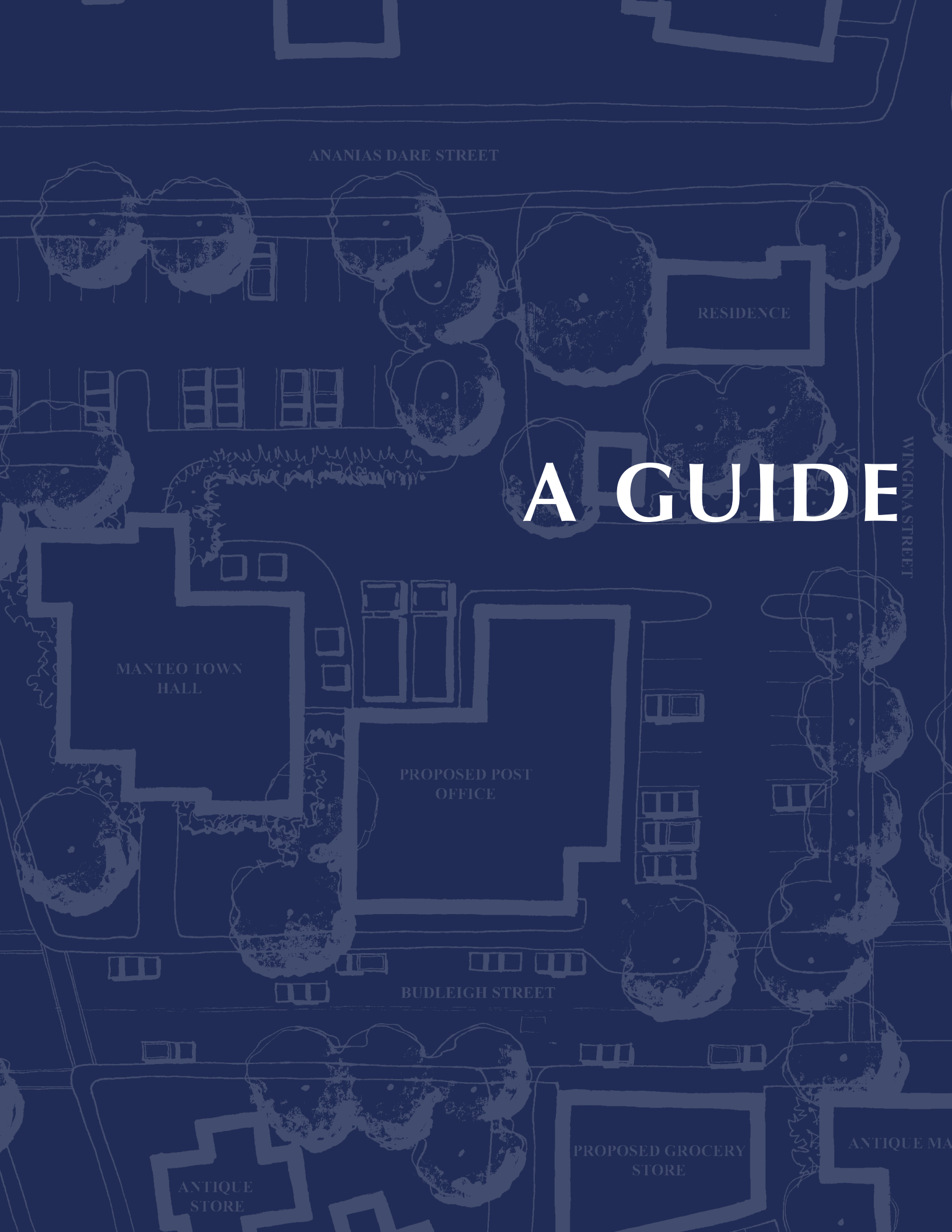
ECONOMY

Manteo’s economy was once based on its role as a port of entry to Dare County and its strategic location on the approaches to southern Virginia. Fishing and boat building were major sources of employment. Recent changes have seen the end of its function as a port except for pleasure craft, while traditional fishing and fish-related occupations now occupy only a very small number of persons. Primary activities are government, business in the financial and real estate sectors, tourism, entertainment, and services. Tourism is a seasonal market, with the high season running from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Some hotels and visitor facilities close entirely in the off-season, although others operate year-round.

Tranquil House Inn



Traffic on Main Highway Photo: M. Sweitzer



A GUIDE

This plan does not attempt to provide a blueprint for a future Manteo, but instead offers tools and concepts that should enable the town to reach a future whose shape will continue to evolve with time, but one that remains consistent with the desires of its residents.

To this end, the plan should be considered a strategy, and the projects developed and shown in the plan are there as illustrations of the sorts of development that can be accomplished within the proposed guidelines, and which the guidelines are designed to encourage. It is important to stress that any design solutions are based on public opinion as expressed through both the survey and the discussions in multiple public and individual meetings between the team, the Steering Committee and residents of the town.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This plan has been prepared to serve as a guide for the Town of Manteo to help it deal with developmental issues that can be expected over the coming twenty years. It is directed toward the Board Commissioners, the Planning and Zoning Board, and the town staff, but it is also intended for residents so that they too will be fully involved in making the many decisions that determine the character of

the town as it continues to develop. It is hoped that it will serve as a guide to further direct discussions and decisions.

The concepts and approaches used in the plan are intended to establish the guidelines for development. Proposals for changes in current land uses in the town should be measured against the plan, and approval should be contingent on a demonstration by the proponents that the proposal substantially meets both the letter and the spirit of the plan. This is intended to correct the present situation in which planning is often ignored in favor of narrow adherence to the now outdated zoning ordinance, and where development does not necessarily fit into either the character of the town or good planning practice.

It is hoped that this document will assist project proponents and developers in proposing projects that meet these criteria. For the larger projects that can be expected from time to time, it is also anticipated that this plan will guide interested parties to develop their proposals in concert with town officials from the beginning to ensure that the development is a joint effort that meets both the needs of the developer and the desires of the town as expressed through its adopted plans and regulations.

MISSION STATEMENT

THIS PLAN FORMS THE BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MANTEO FOR THE COMING 20 YEARS. IT ESTABLISHES THAT MANTEO WILL MAINTAIN ITS CHARACTER AS A SMALL TOWN OCCUPIED YEAR ROUND, WITH AN ECONOMY THAT ACCOMMODATES INTENSIVE TOURISM DURING THE SUMMER. THE TOWN WILL USE THE PLAN TO PROMOTE LIMITED, PLANNED GROWTH, ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND INTEGRATE THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE TOWN THROUGH A COMBINATION OF IMPROVED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS, WHILE CELEBRATING THE PAST HISTORY AND CONTINUITY OF LIFE OF THE EARLY SETTLERS AND RECENT ARRIVALS ALIKE. THE PLAN HELPS THE TOWN TO ESTABLISH A PATTERN OF CITIZEN

INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS AND ENCOURAGES DEVELOPERS TO WORK OPENLY WITH THE TOWN TO ENSURE THAT NEW BUILDING AND REDEVELOPMENT ALIKE RESPECT AND MAINTAIN THEIR COMPATIBILITY WITH THE TOWN'S STANDARDS AND STYLES. FINALLY, THE PLAN OFFERS GUIDANCE ON NEW METHODS OF MANAGING SUCH ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AS STORM WATER, LANDFILL RECLAMATION, EROSION AND LIGHT POLLUTION.



Town Docks Photo: N. Cashwell

The Plan is based on desires expressed by town residents, sound planning practice, and a realistic assessment of the development potential in the town and on Roanoke Island. It recommends maintaining the present quality that can best be described as “the Manteo Style”. This consists of modestly sized buildings built on a grid system of streets that encourages walking, fostering a more leisurely and open way of life. The plan provides guidance for builders and developers to show how this can be accomplished.



Aerial showing small town character Photo: D. Stein

GOALS

1. To protect, preserve and enhance the small-town character of Manteo.
2. To enhance the quality of life for Manteo residents and further develop and enhance the attractiveness of Manteo as a destination for visitors.
3. To integrate the parts of Manteo through appropriate planning and design.
4. To enhance the ability of the Town to adapt flexibly to changes in circumstances.
5. To modernize the planning process and its implementation through zoning regulation to ensure the accomplishment of these goals.
6. To ensure that all decisions on projects will be “consistent with the plan” they would be reviewed against both the intent of the plan and the specific zoning requirements.
7. To better coordinate planning and development on Roanoke Island with Dare County in order to ensure consistency and compatibility between the developments of the respective jurisdictions.

8. To provide for a more orderly and consensual development process inclusive of all parties – developers, town officials and residents.

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish design guidelines for Manteo.
2. Adopt a new plan and implement zoning regulations.
3. Identify a number of specific design projects or approaches to development for use as models for projects or for implementation as the town may decide.
4. Provide a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails allowing access to all parts of the town and the island.
5. Incorporate the latest environmental standards for storm-water management, on-site waste disposal, and lighting in the town building regulations.

PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Manteo will maintain the existing small town atmosphere.
2. Manteo’s first priority is to ensure a high quality of life for its residents. As such, it will endeavor to provide facilities and opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities and to encourage a mix of activities suited to them.
3. Manteo will use the spirit of the plan as the primary guide for development. Zoning and building regulations are intended to foster the small-town spirit.
4. Manteo will encourage an open, transparent planning process for planning all significant developments.
5. All decisions on projects should be consistent with the plan. Decisions should be based on the intent of the plan rather than solely on a technical interpretation of the zoning regulation. Where differences occur over interpretation of uses and requirements set forth in the zoning regulations, the plan should be used as a guide for resolving the conflicting points of view.
6. Town projects will be reviewed for consistency with the plan.
7. Development is a joint process between a developer/owner and the town. New commercial or group housing projects should be undertaken in a cooperative manner that seeks to both protect the interests and rights of the landowner and enhance the quality of life and small-town character of Manteo.
8. Manteo will continue to accommodate appropriate growth, and will designate areas consistent with this

approach for additional commercial, residential and recreational development.

9. Manteo recognizes the need to provide additional housing for its resident population and especially those on limited incomes. It will establish policies and programs and designate areas where additional housing can be developed to help increase the supply in the area. The town will also work with the county to develop a program to increase Dare County’s supply of affordable housing.
10. Manteo encourages an increased range of commercial activities consistent with its small-town character. New developments should, wherever possible, be located in pedestrian-friendly, accessible areas designed to reduce the need for vehicular travel and parking.
11. Manteo will promote pedestrian-friendly development. A clear need for a town such as Manteo is to maintain the personal contacts and relationships that typify a small town. To this end, Manteo will encourage compact development, easy pedestrian and bicycle access and mobility, and mixed uses.
12. Manteo will encourage mixed-use development in commercial areas. To assist in maintaining the stock of affordable housing, new commercial developments shall be encouraged to provide for mixed uses including office, retail and residential facilities. Experience in Manteo suggests that housing above commercial units is one appropriate method of creating new, affordable housing stock.
13. Manteo will manage traffic and parking more effectively. A primary concern of residents and business owners alike is the question of parking. While parking problems have eased since the removal of the Dare County Court to Midway, longer-term approaches including providing better signage and identification of parking, encouraging full time residents working downtown to consider other means of transportation or providing locations for all-day parking, and potentially creating a peak-season remote parking and shuttle system for visitors and downtown employees should be considered.
14. Manteo will undertake periodic reviews and updates of this plan. The process is designed to maintain its currency and relevance to changing conditions. Workshops for commissioners will be held following each election, and the Town will undertake a public review process for the plan at least once every five years to determine whether it requires changes to meet new conditions.

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN

The plan is a document that presents a coherent vision of the future of Manteo, developed over several months through an inclusive process. As such, it represents a consensus on appropriate directions and actions for the town. These should be the primary source of guidance when issues arise. The zoning regulations are intended to implement the plan, and as such are subsidiary to it.

Primacy of the plan over the zoning map.

The plan is the guiding document for the development of Manteo. Its spirit and concepts are the basis for planning new development and redeveloping older areas. As such, the Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners should use the plan as the guiding document in making determinations about the appropriateness of design, scale and location of new construction. Zoning should be used to implement the intent of the plan as well as specific zoning requirements should be considered.

The Plan is the guiding document for decisions regarding changes to the town.

This plan was developed with significant public input from both citizens and town officials. Its adoption therefore represents a statement of the guiding will of the community. It also offers strong support to the Board of Commissioners when making decisions.

The plan, like any such document, does not provide a strict blueprint for the future, but rather serves as a living document to guide changes. It needs to be monitored on an ongoing basis for relevance, and town officials need to maintain their familiarity with its provisions and concepts. Officials should periodically engage in public review of the plan and its implementation, and new officials should be given a formal opportunity to familiarize themselves with the plan and its details in order to maintain an effective and consistent approach toward new development.

It is important to stress that design as envisioned in the master plan does not limit itself to building issues only. It includes creating linkages and a sense of order, mitigating incompatible land uses in the short and long term, allocating sufficient area for pedestrian as well as vehicular right of way,



Typical home showing the Manteo Way of Building

and generally assisting in helping the community maintain the quality of life that it values. While the concept of quality of life is intangible, improvement in layout and scale of structures and practical solutions to conflicts between human use and natural resource protection can help bring about major improvement in the immediate and long term.

GUIDANCE ON DESIGN

Appropriate design can provide a framework from which the sense of community can be reinforced. The issue of design in the community has been often equated with the idea of style. One of the clearest statements from the survey is the desire to maintain “the Manteo Style”. However after careful examination it was found that, architecturally speaking, there are a wide variety of styles of buildings in Manteo. They range from traditional colonial to nineteenth century Victorian to imitation Tudor half-timber and a mixture of modern post war models. The distinguishing characteristics of this style appear to consist of modest building volumes on small lots, two-story construction (now modified in the past years since the imposition of FEMA regulations to include an open under-story to bring the inhabited zone above the flood line for a storm-driven high tide. Some newer buildings have gone to three stories, with an internal height limitation of 35 to 43 feet imposed, depending on location. Other aspects of the Manteo Style include the relationship to the water channels, the marine forest and planted areas surrounding most structures that create a sense of balance between open space and built space. Lighting is modest and doesn’t spoil the view of the night sky, while the scale of the streets provide a sense of urban living in a rural area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One of the most significant outcomes of the planning process in Manteo, both in 1981 and in 2003, has been the intense involvement of citizens in the dialogue between the town and the planning teams. Manteo has shown that it benefits heavily from the process, reducing the levels of conflict, increasing support for new projects and concepts and giving the citizens a meaningful say in the directions in which the town is likely to change. This process, though it cannot eliminate controversy and opposition, provides room for the negotiation and constructive debate that lead to agreement. This has been shown in practice to reduce the level of risk for developers, even though it often takes longer to work out all the changes and details to the satisfaction of all parties.

Where major projects are proposed, it might be to the benefit of all parties to engage a trained facilitator to help bring about the consensus needed to define the project and gain its acceptance.

Planning by consensus vs. planning “by right”– avoiding legal conflicts through alternative dispute resolution and “win-win” approaches.

Facilitation and other techniques that come under the heading of “alternate dispute resolution” (ADR) are being used increasingly to avoid costly and nonproductive court battles over issues of planning and zoning. Although the courts remain the arbiter of last resort, negotiated settlements under the guidance of skilled practitioners offer a much less costly and much more productive path to handling these sorts of disputes. Many planning firms offer facilitation services, while more serious disputes can be referred to members of the American Mediation Association, who are often retired judges interested in achieving agreements rather than applying the letter of the law.

Board of Education Offices



New construction showing pedestrian access

The aim is to ensure a fair and orderly process of accommodation to changes in the town while at the same time maintaining the style and quality of life that the town’s residents have indicated is important to them. This style and scale of construction are also responsible for the continuing attractiveness to visitors who form the chief means of support for the town’s businesses.

This process, through early discussions and by offering opportunities to explore alternative approaches, ensures continuing involvement of the residents in the changing nature of the town and minimizes the likelihood of major fights over inappropriate developments.

Regular updates and revisions

As noted above, the plan is intended to serve as a living document that encourages a flexible approach to new development. Large new developments would trigger reexamination of the plan assumptions through small-area plans for the areas in question. Review sessions with town commissioners and planning board members will be scheduled following each election to help them better understand the plan and to bring new members of both bodies up to date on both the plan and its administration. A more detailed, public review process will be undertaken at least once every five years to determine whether changes are needed in the plan to meet new conditions.

Proposals for annexation should trigger a plan update

A concern noted in the discussions that led up to this plan was the question of the possibility of extending the boundary of the Town of Manteo from its present location. Several approaches are possible.

- Small-scale voluntary annexations. This is the present approach, allowing individual landowners to petition the town for new connections to the town’s water and sewage systems. The town’s policy has been to grant extensions only to properties in a prescribed area, located south of the existing northern corporate limits and north of the Route 64 Bypass between the Virginia Dare and Washington Baum bridges. Physical conditions largely preclude commercial and most residential development other than single-family units. This policy represents a minimalist approach to development and reduces conflicts with neighbors and with the county over boundaries.
- Planned annexations. Given the pressures for additional housing that local residents and employees of local businesses could afford (refer to the Housing section for additional detail), the town may wish to consider a planned process to annex certain undeveloped sites near to or contiguous with the present town boundaries suited to the construction of additional housing. With present land values making it difficult to provide such housing, the town could encourage the process through offering certain incentives that would go to properties that come in under this approach. Negotiations with the county over such sites would help reduce the possibility of conflict.

Old Pioneer Theater Photo: J. Turner



While generally not desired as an approach, there may be situations in which the town is presented with a situation in which small areas of unincorporated land are surrounded by land within the corporate boundaries of the town. In such a situation, it might be advisable to require annexation in order to ensure consistency of application of planning and to avoid possible conflicts resulting from disparate provision of services.

Incorporation of environmental standards for stormwater management and on-site waste disposal

New state regulations are proposed to require on-site stormwater retention and management sufficient to handle a one-year storm, or about two inches of water in a single event. While existing buildings will be “grandfathered” and not required to meet the requirements, new construction will have to show its ability to meet these new standards. Since drainage in Manteo is a serious problem given the low-lying and mostly flat terrain, the town should implement the stormwater plan and insist on the use of a skilled landscape architect or engineer for all plans for new commercial construction to ensure that the requirements are met.

Retention ponds, permeable pavement, constructed wetlands, onsite storage for irrigation, etc. are all valuable tools for solving some of the drainage problems as noted in the plan.

Integrating Manteo through design

Manteo should encourage the use of consistent design elements to help integrate the town. These elements would include signage and street furniture, a more consistent grid pattern for streets, extension and completion of the sidewalk network, bicycle paths and design guidelines for commercial development.

Of particular concern, expressed through meetings with members of the Steering Committee, is the desire to improve the integration of the town between the two sides of the Main Highway. While most attention in the past was given to revitalizing the commercial center on the Waterfront, present conditions suggest that similar thought now needs to be given to the areas to the West, the so-called California neighborhood that houses the lower

income and minority communities. The division of this area between the parts that have been incorporated within Manteo’s boundaries and those that lie in the unincorporated areas immediately outside appears to have reduced the level of attention given to the area as a whole.

Design elements, including traffic calming and pedestrian-oriented enhancements on the Main Highway, new sidewalks, street-tree planting, a new community/senior center, upgraded athletic facilities and improvements to the two park sites (Lucy’s Corner and the A.M.E. Zion Church) would contribute significantly to this process of integration.

However, it is important to stress that design and physical improvements will not by themselves overcome the lack of integration between the two sides of the town.

Training public officials

Effective use of the plan requires maintaining familiarity with the document and its intent so that it may be used as a guide in each decision that comes before both the Planning and Zoning Board and the Board of Commissioners.

The elected town officials and the relevant boards (Planning and Zoning, Adjustment) should hold an annual workshop with planning staff to review the plan, discuss the types of issues that have arisen during the previous year, and evaluate the performance of both the document and the implementation process. Citizens should also be invited to observe and participate in a managed manner. It is suggested that it might be appropriate to hold this workshop on a Saturday during the winter, thus allowing a wider audience to attend.

This workshop should be guided by a consultant/facilitator who is able to interpret the types of issues and concerns that arise and suggest possible methods for dealing with them.

Small-area planning

As was demonstrated by the student proposals for the “Salty Dawg” property, it is both possible and, we believe, better for all concerned to undertake the design of such developments



Manteo in snow Photo: J. Turner

as part of a public process of dialogue between the town and the developer, one that offers a better chance for both sides to meet their goals while at the same time ensuring public understanding and support for the project.

These small-area plans are the means whereby new developments and uses can be best integrated into the existing fabric of the town, and they help to avoid both out-of-scale and out-of-place projects that conflict with town values.

This process of public involvement should be initiated prior to developing any plans for a project. Discussions between property owners, town officials and the concerned public should be held in an open forum facilitated by a skilled, neutral party familiar with the plan and the town who is able to guide the discussion in constructive directions and avoid the antagonisms that often hinder meaningful analysis and decision-making in such situations. It should also apply to public projects including schools and county offices.

Small-area planning should be undertaken when the town can reasonably show that the impact of a development is likely to affect a wider area and/or change the character of an area. The process should be used to allow an open debate on updating or otherwise examining the plan in relationship to the proposal to ensure that impacts can be properly handled by the plan, the town utilities, the environment, etc.



THE PROJECTS

THE WATERFRONT

Extend the boardwalk to include future development and additional activity nodes including to and through the Salty Dawg property for public access to waterfront.

Restore and upgrade the water's edge to maintain water quality and its aesthetic appearance. Preserve the natural shoreline and natural drainage patterns and use native vegetation.

Limit erosion in accordance with sound practice and CAMA regulations.

MARITIME VILLAGE OPEN AIR MUSEUM

Tie the waterfront to the Maritime Village tour by installing five pieces of art commemorating the native Americans and the colonial settlers, the old departure point, and other events connected to the town's history.

Create a kiosk/shelter area for the boats and other exhibits designed to become landmarks and orientation devices as well as educational points along the maritime trail.

Create a self-guided walking tour to the maritime village.

SALTY DAWG PROPERTY

Connect the development to the town through the boardwalk from its present terminus to a new one at an observation point south of the marina.

Create a nature viewing destination station at the end of the dock at Salty Dawg.

DOWNTOWN

Adaptive reuse of the old Dare County Courthouse with a new park on the site of the former jail.

Designate sites for the development of appropriate mixed-use senior housing/assisted living/office/retail.

Complete the pedestrian circulation system and improve streetscapes (lighting, planting, benches, sidewalks).

Plant street trees within the town judiciously to avoid a generic appearance.

Location/relocation of the post office or branch post office, in conjunction with the establishment of a new or redeveloped central service/business district.

Create pocket parks for passive recreation and incorporate retention ponds in their design.

Adapt and reinstate the historic overlay zone.

Maintain and improve all roads by adding sidewalks.

WEST SIDE IMPROVEMENTS

Refurbish and improve existing play equipment.

Develop a demonstration of integrated on-site stormwater management and a multi-use recreation area by enlarging the existing canal and edging it with trails, seating areas, bridges, and a chargeable outdoor exhibition area.

Create a roundabout at the intersection of Bideford and Sir Walter Raleigh at Lucy's Corner.

Design and enable/assist construction of a privately owned nonprofit community center.

Upgrade existing basketball court and add another court.

Fernando Street property developed as single-family residences, gradually increasing density toward the marina.

Provide walking and outdoor amenities to create appropriate campus environment.

Maintain the town ball field on the campus site for use by town residents.

Salty-room hotel with adequate parking on site.

Continuous use of the marina.

Open a new entrance road from the intersection of Bowersdown Road and Route 64 to the intersection of Fernando Street and Woodcock Street.

COLLEGE OF THE ALBEMARLE

Adapt the existing buildings and add additional classrooms as necessary and appropriate.

Add year-round housing for faculty and students in addition to seminar rooms to facilitate summer conferences and special summer programs for students.

COMMERCIAL AREA

Encourage commercial construction with parking relocated to the back of the buildings to create direct street access to shops for pedestrian traffic.

Encourage housing above retail establishments to provide an additional source of affordable housing.

Provide a mix of commercial opportunities, including hotels, restaurants, and whole-food supermarket.

SPORT PARK

Create a fishing pond and a waste-water recycling/demonstration area.

Surround the park with a belt of marine forest, interspersed with trails and picnic areas.

Facilitate the construction of a youth center with swimming pool.

Link Agona Street with Bideford Street and Burnside Road with Castonia Lane.

TRAFFIC

Redesign roadway and lane patterns with continuous medians in the section between Bowersdown Road and Sir Walter Raleigh and Fernando Street and reduce curb cuts.

Redesign the major intersections along the highway. Create traffic roundabouts at the Midway, Bowersdown Road, Fernando Street, and Sir Walter Raleigh Street along the highway, and at Sir Walter Raleigh and Bideford on the West Side. Provide a distinct series of points to orient the visitor and residents alike.

Complete the Route 64 street plantings from the Midway north to the planted avenue of oaks on the north side of Roanoke Island.

Utilize the new roundabouts for concentrated plantings.

PLANTING, RECREATION, AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Protect scenic areas and the visual connection to water and forested areas.

Create a public planting scheme differentiated from the domestic horticulture of private properties.

Link all the recreational activities to one another and to the storm-drain management plan.

Protect, enhance, and implement a program of rehabilitation of historic sites.

COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Restore maritime forest, provide event and exhibition space for the county.

Reconstruct the retention basin to serve as a multi-use recreation site.

Provide a pavilion on site with restroom facilities and kiosks.

Establish remote parking served by shuttles during the season at the proposed new county fair site at the Midway.



WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is the process of reaching a destination in a familiar or unfamiliar environment. People visiting an area need to feel oriented and be able to develop a plan to reach their destination. This is achieved using a system that involves the consistent use and organization of sensory cues (design elements).

Most often, these sensory cues, or design elements, are visual. Examples include:

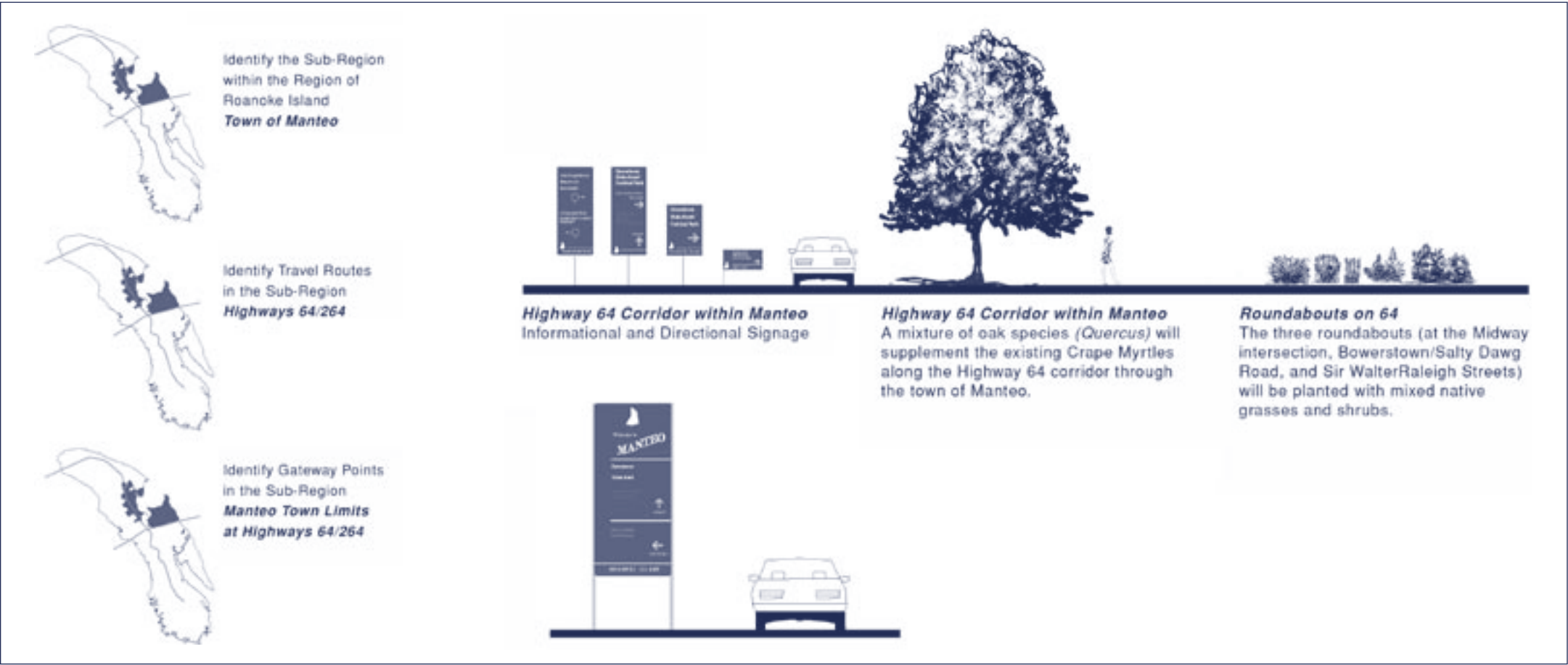
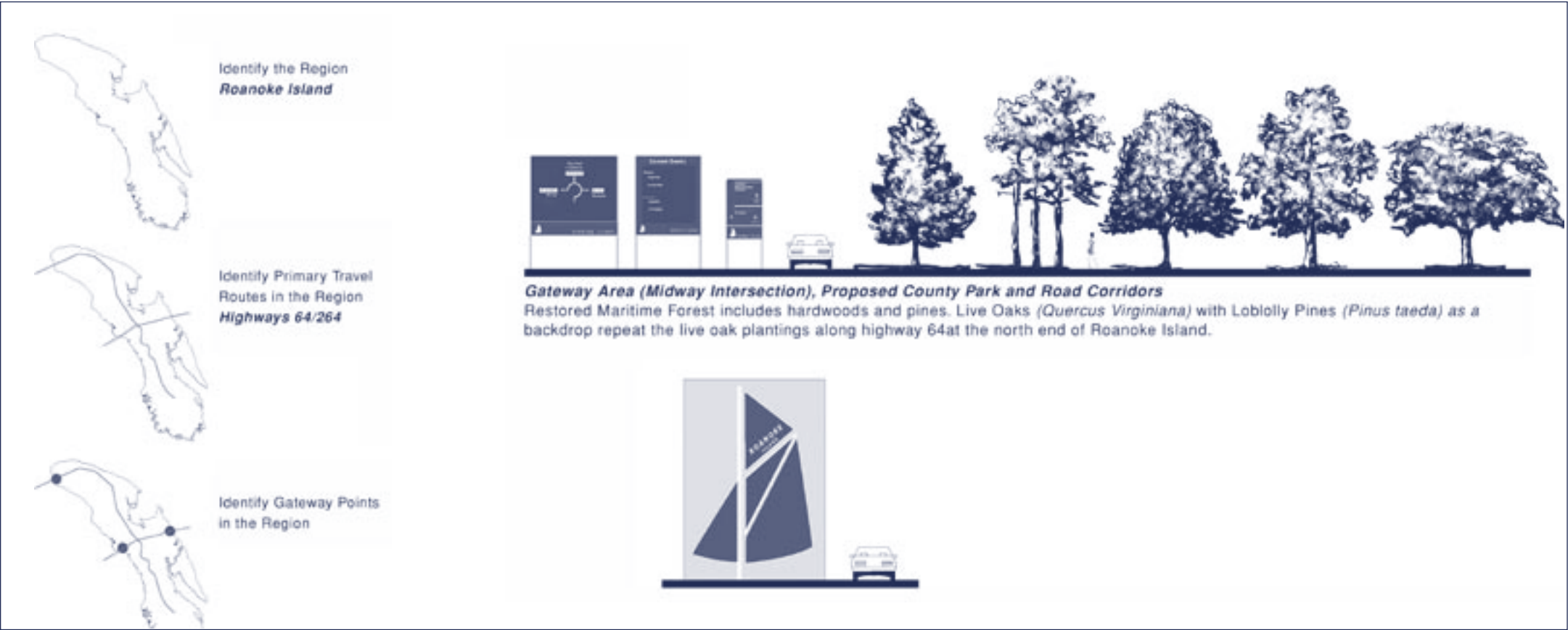
- Signage
- Plantings
- Buildings
- Architectural elements
- Landmarks
- Monuments
- Public art
- Paving patterns or other ground-plane elements, such as street names written on the sidewalk

The wayfinding system must also accommodate users of all abilities, including the sight-impaired, hearing-impaired and mobility-impaired. For these groups, the sensory cues include audible and tactile elements:

- Tactile elements:
 - Braille signs
 - Raised lettering on signs
 - Textures in flooring or paving
 - 3D models or maps
- Audible cues:
 - Auditory maps
 - Video displays with taped messages
 - Bells, buzzers and mechanical sounds
 - Music

DEVELOPING THE WAYFINDING SIGN SYSTEM

The development of the wayfinding system for Manteo and Roanoke Island followed a process that began with taking a detailed look at the components and hierarchy that needed to be established to guide the visitor. This process looked at both the physical environment and the means used by visitors to move through it. It then sought to establish the points and cues that will help create the overall sense of place and the importance of each of the points within it. The process began with the region, and then focused down to more specific areas and finally to sites. The system of information helps the user to follow this progression as well. A common style and format help keep the visitor located both geographically and along the path of any particular route or trail.



- Identify the geographic region (Roanoke Island)
- Identify attractions of regional significance and other facilities that require signage.
- Identify major traffic routes to and within the region (US 64/264).
- Identify gateway points to the region.
- Identify the sub-region (Manteo).
- Identify traffic routes.
- Identify gateway points.
- Identify districts within the sub-region (for example, Downtown and Cartwright Park), or any district or neighborhood within the subregion that has its own identity.

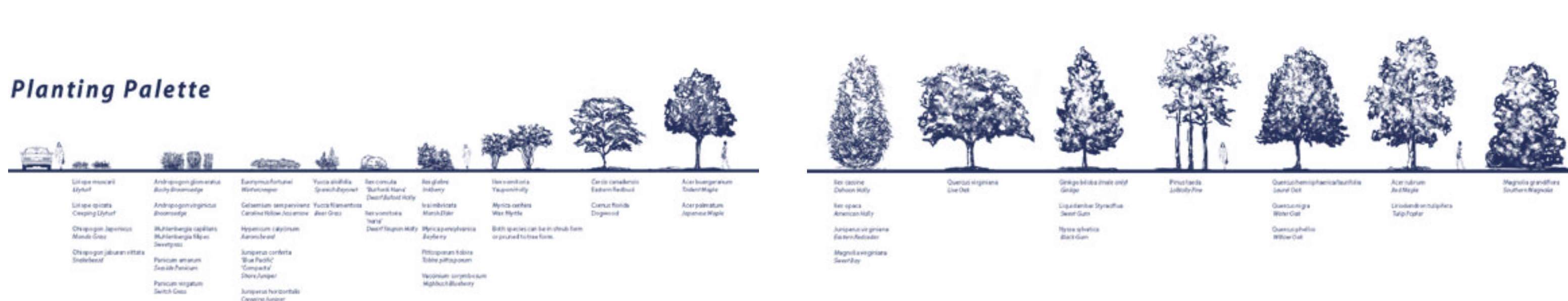
With a wayfinding sign system, the community and its attractions gain a comprehensive and consistent system of signing that makes the whole region much more accessible to the visitor while keeping the number of signs and the potential for confusion to a minimum. The project as developed concentrated only on the issue of signage.

With the construction of the new bridge, Roanoke Island and the Outer Banks have a new entrance. This new approach, however, bypasses the Town of Manteo. While

The present signs and directional indicators provide only limited information and often are located in ways that make the information difficult to follow. Further, the signs fail to create a sense of arrival on Roanoke Island or a distinct sense of place or identity for Manteo. The town has

- The gateway at the intersection at Midway and the sig-

- Design elements will not detract from surroundings or obscure current significant views.
- Signage design will be coordinates with the outdoor maritime museum, downtown, waterfront and other area attractions.



TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Over time, the Main Highway has grown into the major artery connecting the mainland and the Outer Banks. At the same time it became a barrier separating the east and west sides of Roanoke Island and its communities. Commercial and transient traffic has clogged the major artery and a wide commercial strip that follows the typical development patterns seen across the nation has grown up along most of its length within the boundaries of the town. This progression of unidentifiable experiences provides neither the driver nor the pedestrian with a sense of orientation and diminishes the experience of the tourist.

The recent completion of the Virginia Dare Memorial Bridge has given Manteo the unique opportunity to create a new corridor enhancing the entrance identity of Manteo. The reduction in traffic along the highway through town also will allow it to reconnect the east and west sides of the town and surrounding communities.

DESIGN PROPOSALS FOR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND TRAFFIC CALMING

The town has established a number of high-priority goals. These include calming the traffic on the Main Highway and clearly marking the entrance into Manteo as well as making it safe. Other goals are to improve circulation in the historic core of the town and to better manage the parking situation.

1. ROUNDABOUTS

The plan proposes that the town undertake construction of a series of roundabouts to improve both traffic flow and encourage pedestrian access to the commercial areas along the highway. Sites are proposed at the intersections of the Main Highway and Sir Walter Raleigh Street, Fernando Street and Bowsertown Road, at the intersection of Sir Walter Raleigh Street and Bideford Street, and at Midway. Since each of these sites is on a state highway, concurrence and funding from N.C. Department of Transportation will be required. DOT engineers have indicated that the roundabouts on the Main Highway

at Bowsertown, Fernando and Sir Walter Raleigh could be built within a short period of time. There may be some discussion about the third site, while the major roundabout at Midway will require extensive additional study and agreement by NCDOT, which has indicated that there may be problems with the design of this facility. However, it should be noted that present road layout makes the turn into Manteo confusing, and has led to a number of serious accidents as traffic from the new bridge fails to slow sufficiently for the intersection.

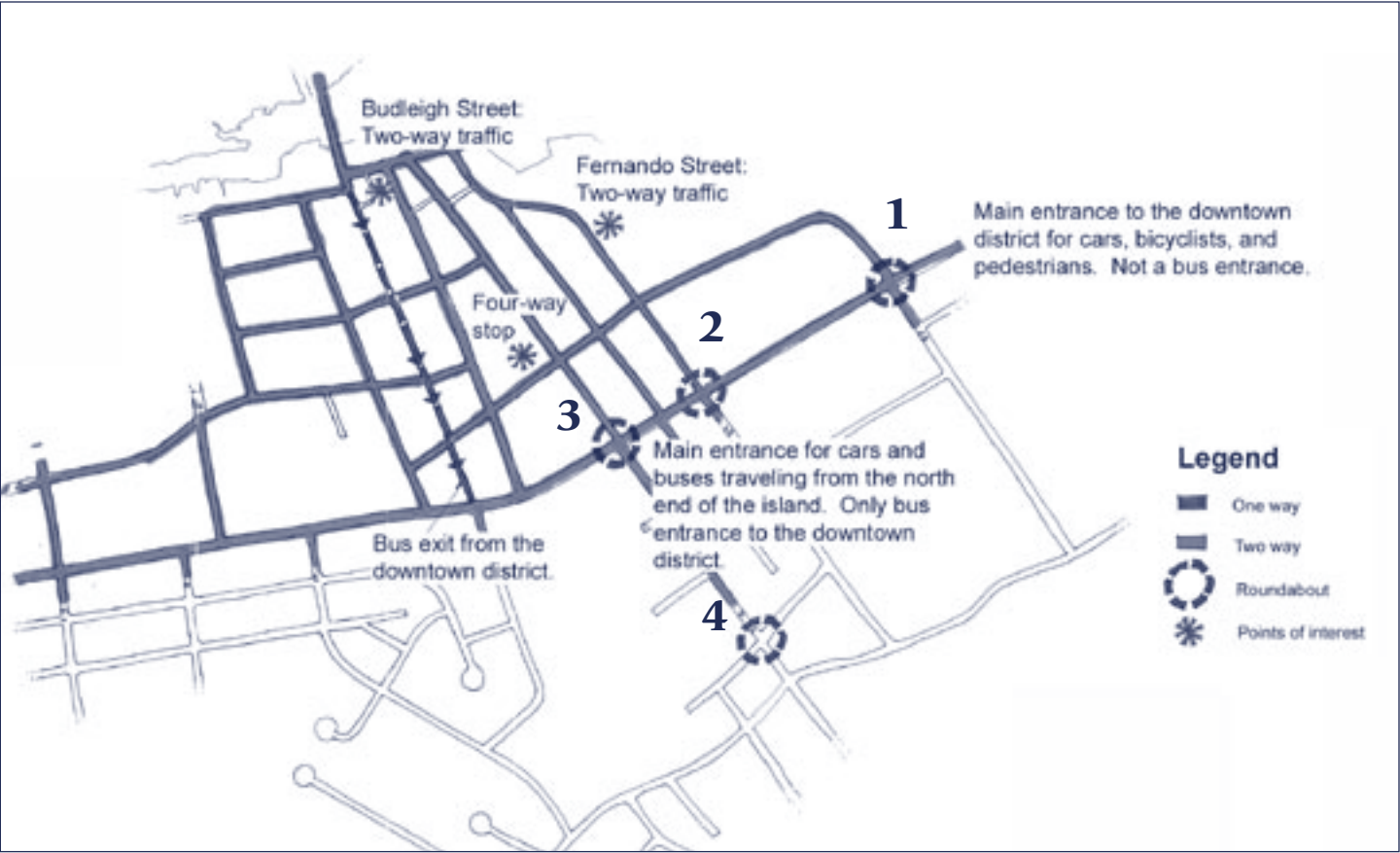
2. NEW CONNECTIONS

As a result of the proposal for roundabouts at important intersections along the Main Highway additional changes to the present traffic pattern have been developed to provide for both smoother flow into and out of the core, as

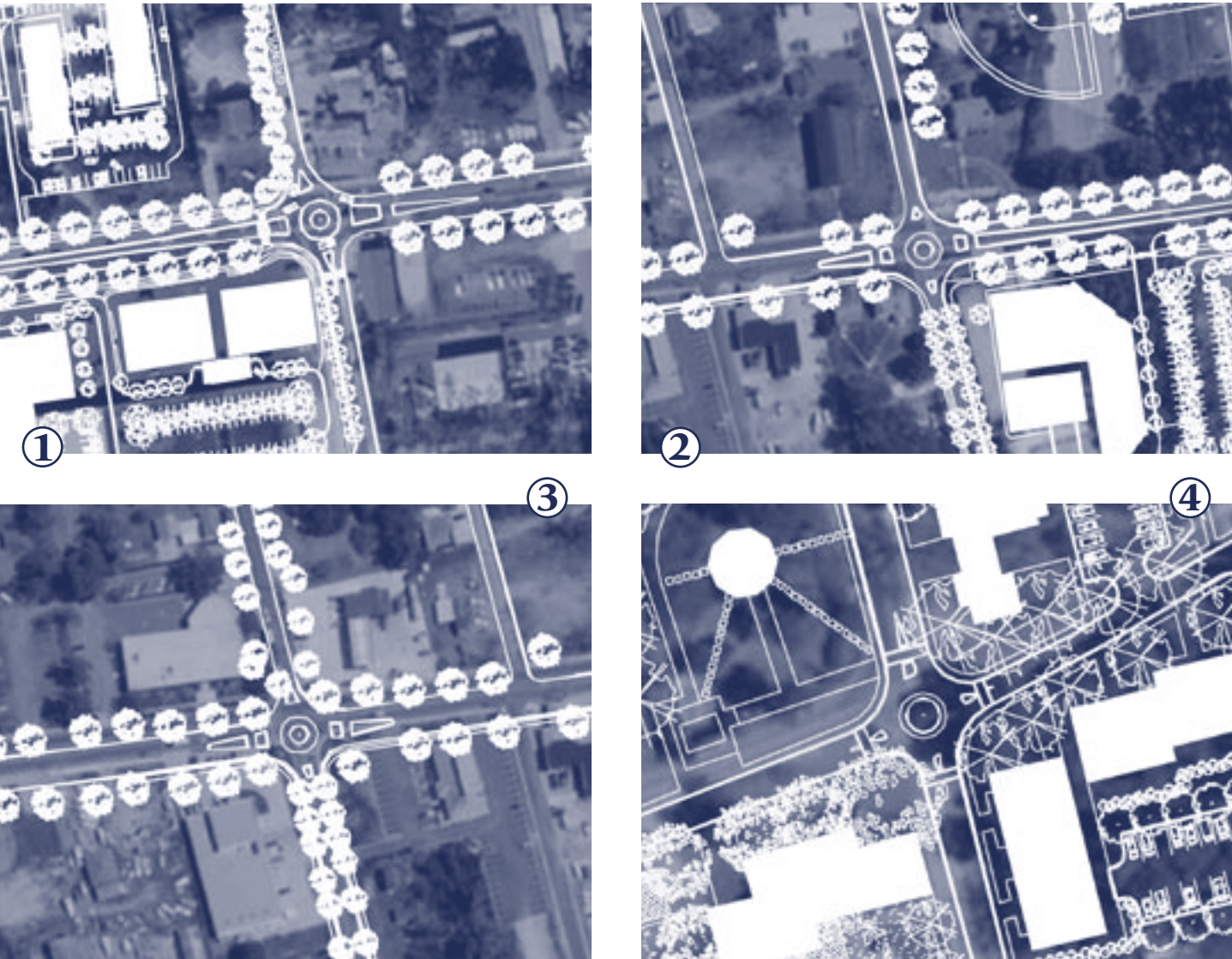
well as to improve connections from other parts of town or to diffuse the heaviest traffic away from the highway. These changes include:

- Redesigning roadway and lane patterns with continuous medians in section between Bowsertown Road and Sir Walter Raleigh or Fernando streets, and reducing the number of curb cuts.
- Opening a new entrance road from the intersection of Bowsertown and the Main Highway to the intersection of Fernando Street and Uppowoc Avenue, running behind the present middle school and the Salty Dawg property. These intersections need to be carefully realigned to eliminate the present offset. This road will serve to accommodate both the Salty Dawg development and the proposed new campus for the College of the Albemarle.

Plan showing new connections and roundabout locations Drawing: M. Sweitzer



Plans of proposed roundabouts (numbers match locations on the plan, opposite page) Images: M. Sweitzer



- Completing the grid sections though the extension of Agona Street to Bideford Street behind the site of Lucy's Corner, and connecting Scarborough Street to California Lane.
- Restriping Sir Walter Raleigh Street west of the Main Highway and build sidewalk and install planting and lighting along north side of street.

3. PARKING

One of the frequently heard statements about parking in Manteo is that many of the downtown parking spaces are taken by employees of downtown businesses. Merchants who feel that this interferes with their businesses should work with the town to develop a policy to encourage employees to park outside the main business

area. Federal tax law allows employers to deduct the cost of parking for employees from their taxes, which might offer a small revenue stream to those businesses that have additional space available and who might be willing to rent it out. Additionally, NCDOT has recommended that the town consider replacing some of the three-hour parking zones with two-hour limits, in order to encourage a higher turnover rate. Finally, present parking is used inconsistently. Festival Park's lot, under agreement with the Town, is designated for overflow and extended term parking, but is often underutilized. Making better use of this facility should be explored. Improved signage directing visitors to parking is also needed, as recommended in the signage section above.

Proposed Midway Roundabout and County Park and Gateway Sculpture Image: A. Stein / A. Ryan



Typical of any similar location where large events draw crowds on a few days of the year, Manteo has had to face the need for additional parking for those specific periods. Since the present inventory cannot accommodate the needs of all the people wishing to attend, it is recommended that the town work to explore a program of remote parking using facilities belonging to the school system, businesses on the Main Highway not open during the events, and, in the future, the relocated college. Employees who are working on the events should be required to use the remote parking to ensure maximum availability of nearby parking for visitors.

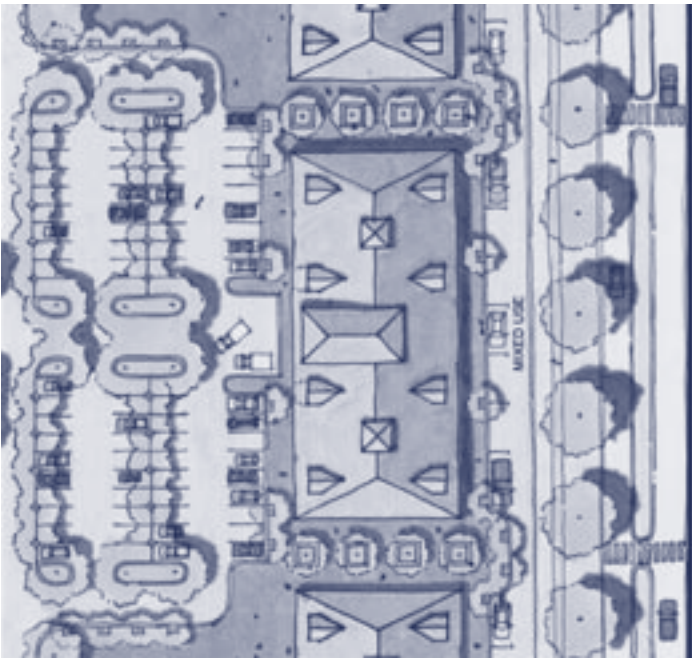
Additionally, the town should establish remote parking served by shuttles during the high season at the proposed new county park at Midway and at Festival Park. There is also a potential site at the proposed new College of the Albemarle, since it is unlikely that their lots will be used to capacity during summer. Better management of parking is a high priority for residents, according to the survey, and several possible approaches have been suggested.

Along with the policies for remote parking for events, calming devices related to the use of the new visitor center and access to the county courthouse should be considered a priority as well, and would help the overall flow and safety of the traffic.

The following proposals for the rotaries and other traffic-calming techniques along the highway are designed to permit traffic to move more smoothly through the intersections while also permitting a steady and much better protected flow of non-vehicular (foot and bicycle) traffic.

- Develop a comprehensive approach to the intersections, consistent signage standards and plantings to enhance and create a safe and enjoyable experience for pedestrians and bicyclists while reconnecting communities across the Main Highway corridor.
- Establish a more consistent grid pattern of streets for future development and connect existing dead-end streets.
- Extend and complete the sidewalk and bicycle-path networks.
- Create pedestrian-oriented enhancements.

- Work with NCDOT, Dare County and the Town of Nags Head to establish a bicycle and pedestrian path along the connecting bridge.
- Establish updated building regulations to encourage new construction with parking behind buildings or at the side, and direct street access to shops for pedestrian traffic.
- Develop parking in commercial areas with protected entries and parking relocated to the backs of the buildings.
- Explore the use of remote parking for regular employees and for special events.



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE MAIN HIGHWAY

The commercial zone along the Main Highway offers residents, tourists and those who work in the town convenient access to shopping and other businesses typical of twentieth century commercial development. Many of these are located in formerly residential buildings converted for the purpose, or in single-story strip malls with several units under a single roof. Parking is typically in front of the buildings in large paved lots adjacent to the highway.

While these areas are conveniently located for residents and visitors, they are poorly designed, interfere with vehicular flow along the highway, are generally inaccessible to pedestrians and create a sense of visual blight.

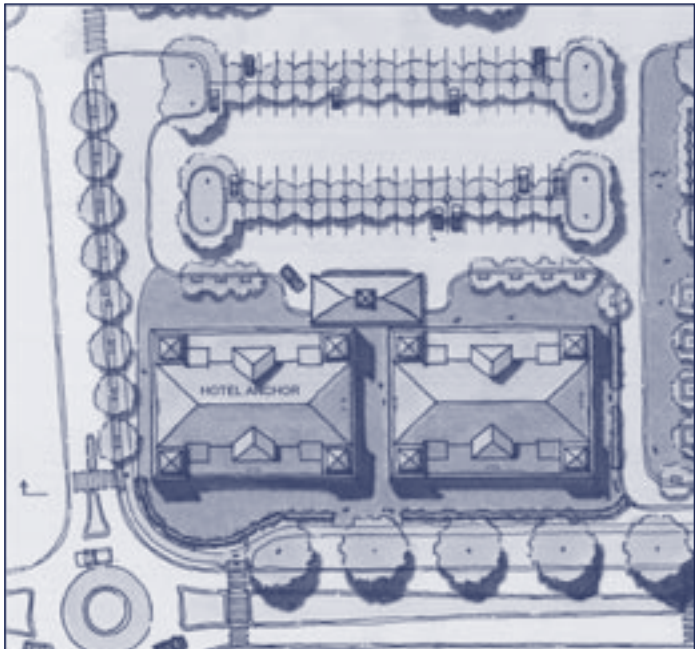
ISSUES

- There is a need to provide a pleasant and safe shopping experience for all.
- There is a need to improve the economic viability of the commercial district by encouraging safe access and providing attractive and interesting buildings and shop designs.
- There is a need to eliminate hazardous conditions for motorists and pedestrians alike.
- Parking needs to be treated with sensitivity to design issues for the safety of motorists and those on foot.
- Improvements to the visual quality of the Main Highway will enhance the safety of travel for all.
- The commercial development should be contained within the existing area and prevented from spreading further along the Main Highway.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

- Commercial buildings should be located close to the road, with parking behind the structures.
- Commercial buildings should be encouraged to incorporate dwelling units above retail/office space.
- Multi-business locations (e.g. shopping centers) should be designed to encourage interaction of users through seating, landscaping, lighting, physical, and visual connections that encourage informal encounters.
- Traffic aisles should allow continuous circulation without dead-end lanes.

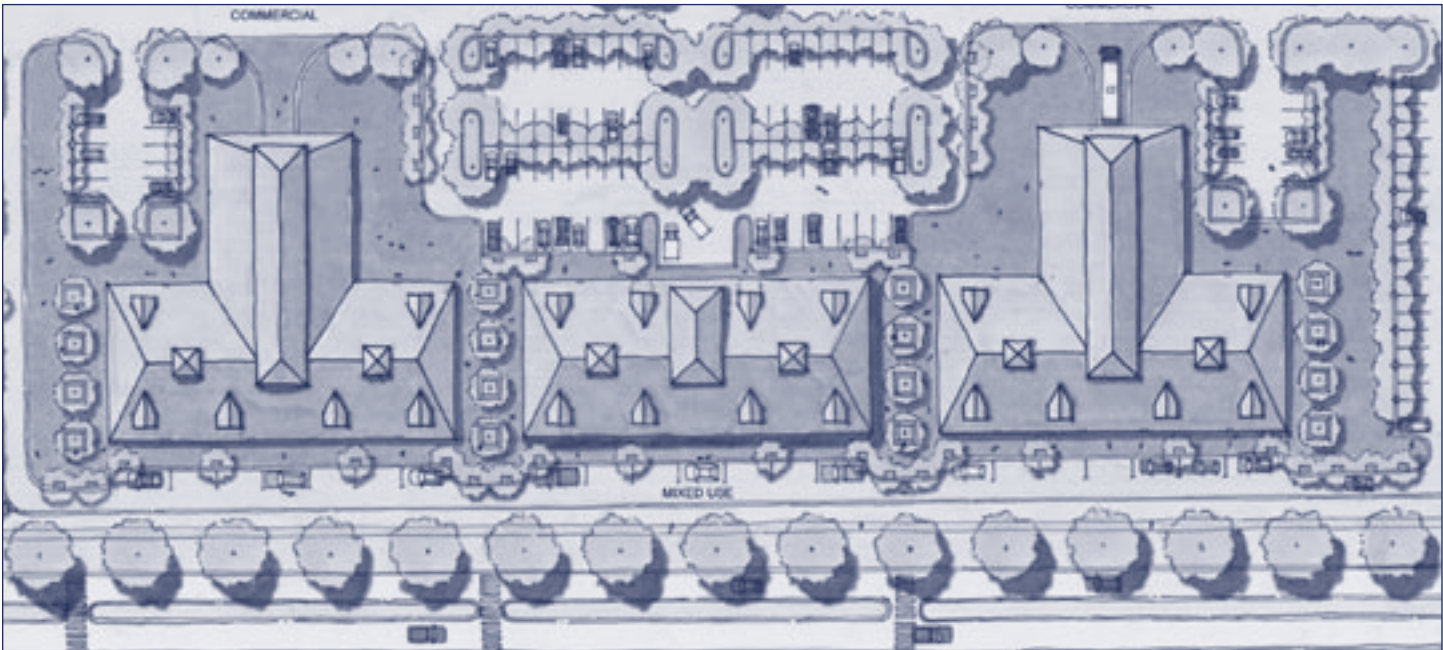
- Drop-off lanes should be provided adjacent to store entries.
- Planting strips and large-canopy trees should be provided to shade cars and pedestrians.
- Pedestrian walkways should be designated and clearly marked.
- Storm water should be managed on site to the maximum degree feasible through retention areas and the use of pervious pavement materials.
- Consideration should to be given to the town’s architectural traditions, both in its design elements and in scale, for the design of all new commercial structures and the reconstruction of older commercial areas.
- Preference should be given to vehicular access to businesses from side streets. Curb cuts should be kept to a minimum consistent with requirements for emergency vehicle access.
- Visual unity and a clearly identifiable image should be created among the various stores within a complex. This can be achieved using continuous canopy, trellises, parking and paving as well as through the design of the building facades.
- Proper location, storage and handling of waste with screening should be provided to accommodate both the functional needs of businesses and the requirements of trash removal.



Commercial district on Main Highway Photo: D. Stein



Redevelopment showing placement of buildings on street front Drawings: J. Robbins



HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Two facts stand out with regard to housing for Manteo’s population. First, there is a continued growth in demand for units in all types and for all segments of the population. There is a slow but steady growth of the population, which has meant that prices, as in other beach communities, have risen far faster than incomes, putting most units out of the range of the typical person employed in Manteo. The second fact is the continued aging of the population, which currently contains a large proportion of retired persons. As these people age, there will be a demand for housing appropriate to their changing needs, including smaller units and assisted-living facilities. At present, there are no assisted-living facilities in the county, meaning that those in need of them must be uprooted from their homes and communities.

Given the very limited area of land still to be developed on the island, the problem of creating additional housing has become acute. Since housing prices are market driven and reflect the cost of land, construction and finance, bringing down these three factors is the only means by which more affordable units can be created.

While more affordable housing can result from reducing the cost of housing through both reductions in the cost of finance and construction, the largest variable is the amount of land needed per unit of housing. Increased density is the only way



to make up for the increased value of building sites noted above. However, with only a limited number of sites on which housing could be constructed at an increased density, the overall impact is likely to fall short of the need. Nonetheless, the town should encourage higher density development on the remaining sites, where appropriate. Another approach that has worked in the past has been the construction of rental units above commercial space, termed “mixed use” development. The plan recommends that all of the existing commercial areas and future areas that may be zoned commercial encourage this form of development as well. This type of housing is particularly suited to younger persons and families without children, though proper construction techniques would make it possible to provide suitable accommodations for families as well.

A process developed jointly by the town and the planning team involving the developers, town officials, the public and the designers in an ongoing conversation about the proposals as they developed offers a method for encouraging new housing suited to both town needs and market conditions. The process included several steps that could, if needed, provide feedback and further refinement before proceeding to the next phase.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Identify and develop preliminary alternatives
- Discuss issues with the planning board and the public
- Check the proposals against the reality of the market
- Redevelop or refine the alternatives using the information gained in the previous steps
- Proceed to architectural and engineering development, including the use of a qualified landscape architect for siting, water management, open space design and planting

This process was applied in a case study within the town, at the request of the town commissioners, to a site which was under active consideration for development adjacent to the existing core.

The proposed plan for the Salty Dawg property shows an approach to developing a site that is consistent with the values expressed by the town and its residents through the survey, mixing moderate density housing with a hotel while at the same time protecting the wetlands and extending both the street grid and pedestrian access to help fully incorporate the project into the traditional core of the town.

SALTY DAWG

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 21-acre site commonly referred to as the Salty Dawg property is being considered for development because of its size and proximity to downtown Manteo. It is a partially wooded site on the shore of the bay adjacent to the town wetlands. It consists of approximately 14 acres of developable land including about one acre of internal wetland as well as seven acres of open wetland along the shore on the southern side of the property. There is a large boat-repair works and dry storage facility situated at the south end of the property adjacent to an established marina. The existing owner’s house on the site is surrounded by a dense grove of trees and is only visible from the water. The Hulcam Dairy farmhouse on the site is one of the oldest and most significant historical structures in Manteo.

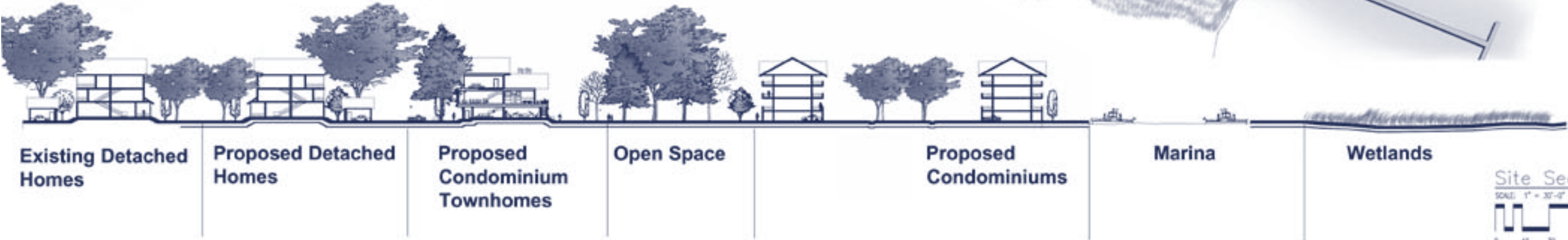
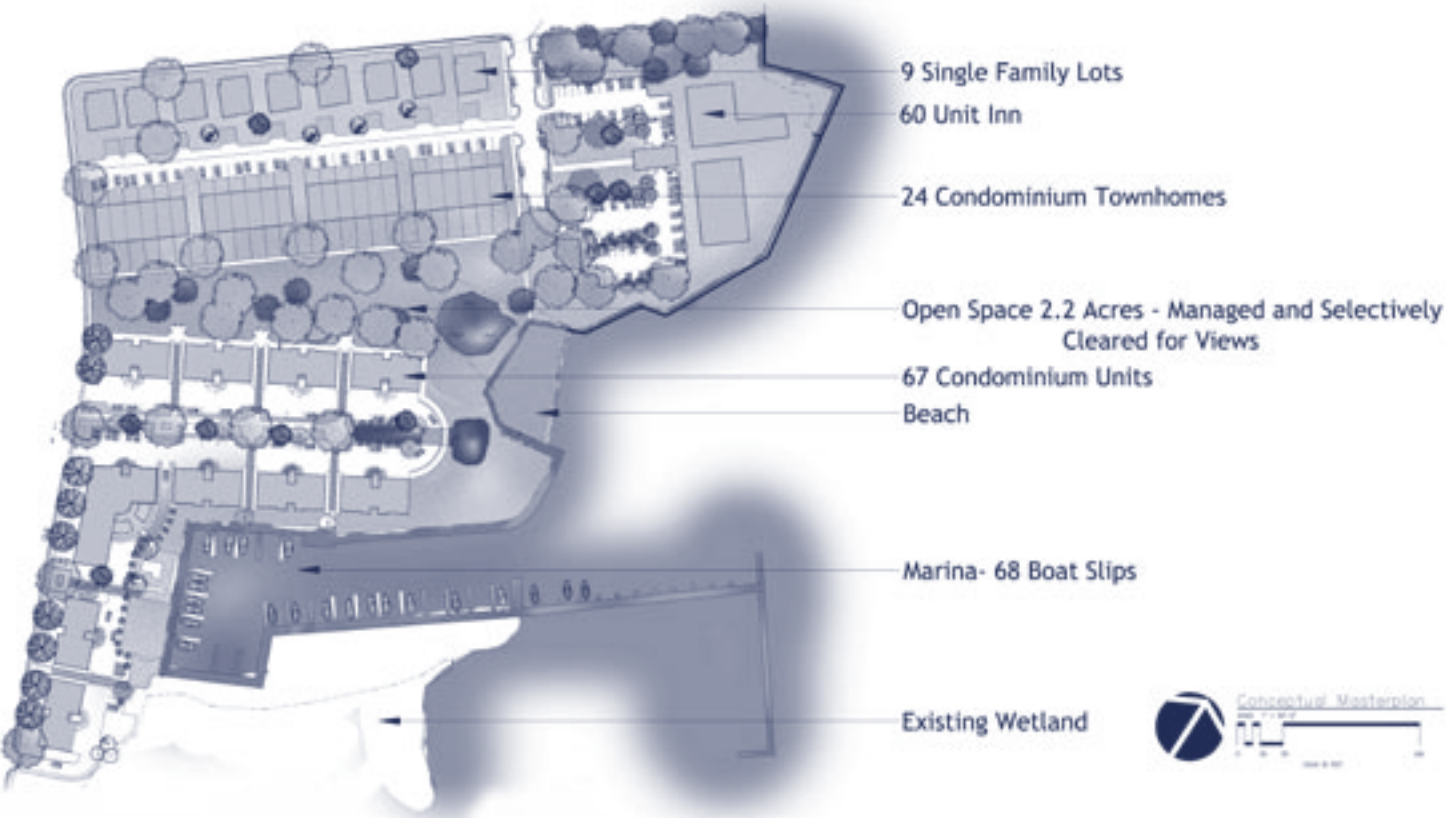
Salty Dawg property Photo: D. Stein



ISSUES

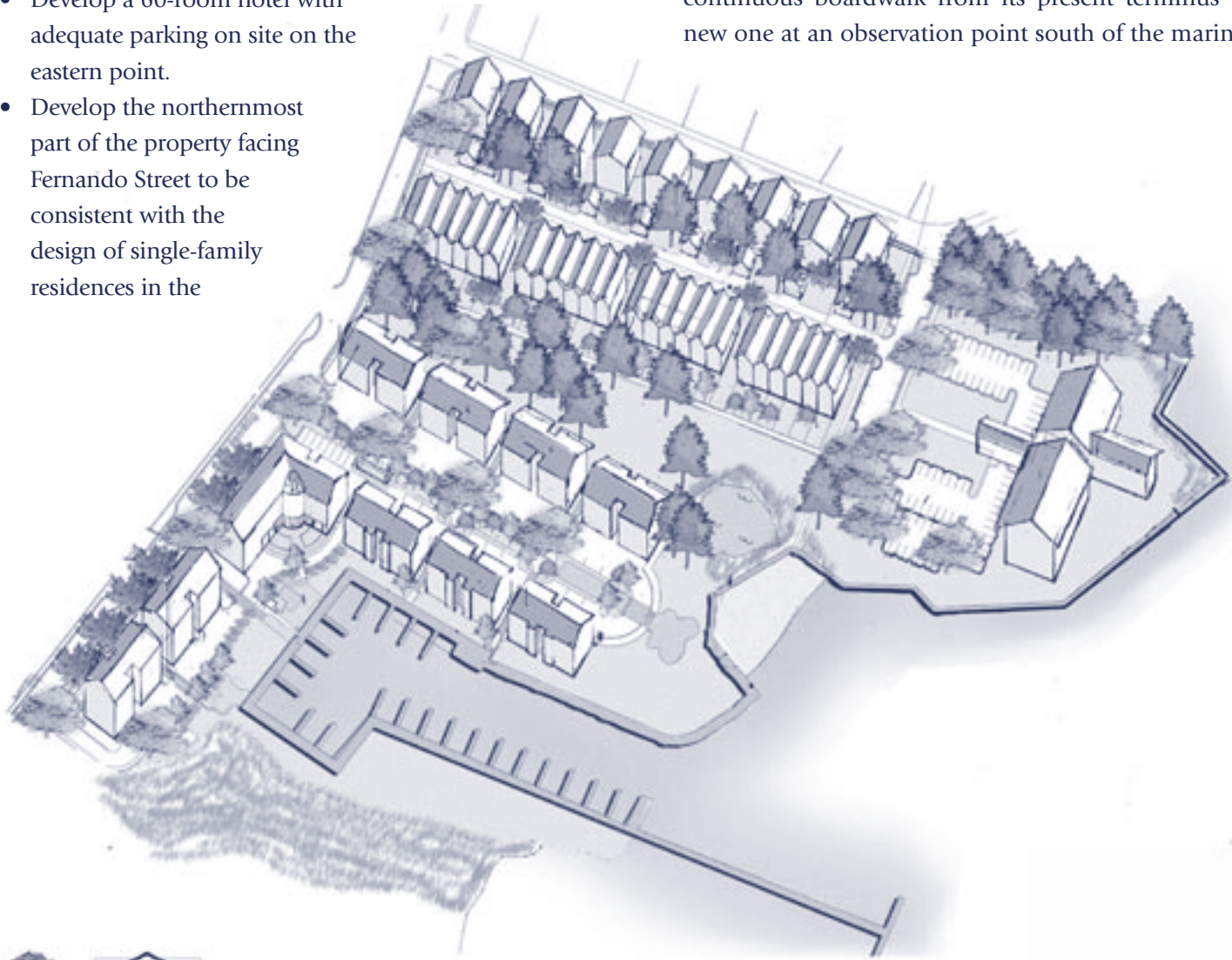
- Protect public access while preserving the wetland habitat.
- Blend the new development into the existing downtown in an effort to refrain from overshadowing historical Manteo.
- Create a distinct zone along the new road with a signage system and appropriate streetscape plantings.
- Provide easy and orderly access from the new road to the new development.
- Design the required parking in such a way as to minimize visual disturbance.

- Integrate the development with the open-space system of Manteo and promote recreational activities for all types of users in the development.
- Develop a list of suggested plants native to the North Carolina coast for use in street and park design.
- Employ best management practices for storm water, erosion control and light pollution.
- Implement the strategies developed in Manteo’s 2000 Storm Water Management Plan.



DESIGN PROPOSALS

- Develop a new road extending Uppowoc Avenue and Bowsertown Road to create a new vehicular access route to downtown.
- The owners of the Salty Dawg property and the College of the Albemarle should negotiate jointly with the town, the county and the state to establish the alignment of the new road. The preferred right of way would run along an alignment jointly donated by them and accepted by the state for maintenance.
- Develop a 60-room hotel with adequate parking on site on the eastern point.
- Develop the northernmost part of the property facing Fernando Street to be consistent with the design of single-family residences in the



- neighborhood, and gradually increase the density of the development toward the marina.
- Use traditional coastal building types at a human scale, built from materials commonly found in the existing architecture of Manteo.
- Maintain the pedestrian scale and small-town neighborhood atmosphere.
- Use the existing marina to foster public/private interaction.
- Connect the development to the town through the continuous boardwalk from its present terminus to new one at an observation point south of the marina.

DOWNTOWN

EXISTING CONDITIONS

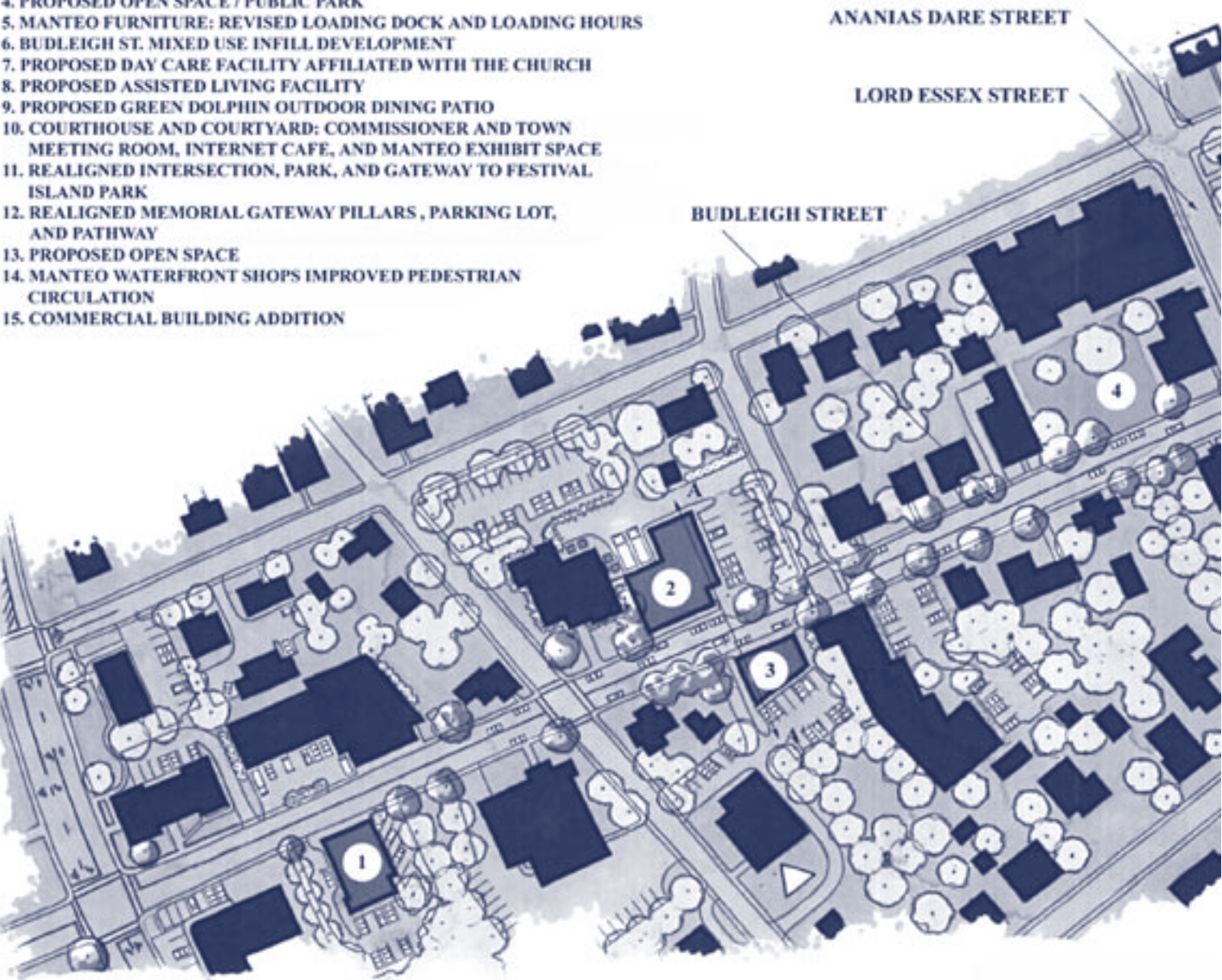
In the past few years, the nucleus of downtown Manteo has evolved from a center of municipal government to a commercial center. The residences in the downtown area have

become “in” places, thus increasing the demand for and cost of the property. Commercial infill development has created new parking issues. The relocation of the post office, the relocation of the county court, the lack of a grocery store in the downtown, as well as the limited parking have combined to discourage many Roanoke Islanders from making regular visits to downtown.

Proposed infill redevelopment for downtown Manteo Drawing: J. Robbins

BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

- 1. CURRENT BOARD OF EDUCATION BUILDING-FUTURE USE: PRIVATE OFFICES
- 2. PROPOSED MANTEO POST OFFICE
- 3. CURENT SPRINT BUILDING-FUTURE USE: SMALL GROCERY STORE / DELI
- 4. PROPOSED OPEN SPACE / PUBLIC PARK
- 5. MANTEO FURNITURE: REVISED LOADING DOCK AND LOADING HOURS
- 6. BUDLEIGH ST. MIXED USE INFILL DEVELOPMENT
- 7. PROPOSED DAY CARE FACILITY AFFILIATED WITH THE CHURCH
- 8. PROPOSED ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY
- 9. PROPOSED GREEN DOLPHIN OUTDOOR DINING PATIO
- 10. COURTHOUSE AND COURTYARD: COMMISSIONER AND TOWN MEETING ROOM, INTERNET CAFE, AND MANTEO EXHIBIT SPACE
- 11. REALIGNED INTERSECTION, PARK, AND GATEWAY TO FESTIVAL ISLAND PARK
- 12. REALIGNED MEMORIAL GATEWAY PILLARS , PARKING LOT, AND PATHWAY
- 13. PROPOSED OPEN SPACE
- 14. MANTEO WATERFRONT SHOPS IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
- 15. COMMERCIAL BUILDING ADDITION





Before and after views of improvements on Queen Elizabeth
Images: J. Robbins



ISSUES

- The current focus is on the vehicle rather than the pedestrian.
- Pedestrian circulation currently follows streets only.
- There is a lack of public open space.
- Parking is adequate, though many residents and visitors view it as a problem.
- Building density is low, and much space is used for surface parking.
- Historic places (buildings and trees) are not appropriately celebrated.
- Design of new retail structures is "generic", weakening the historic quality of the town.
- There are no grocery or convenience stores in the core area.
- There are no public gathering areas in the core commercial district.
- Flooding is a regular occurrence after heavy rains and storms.
- The traditional ditch system is not maintained and cannot handle storm runoff.
- Toxicity levels are high in the waters surrounding Roanoke Island due to the high water table, untreated storm water and flooding of septic systems outside town limits.
- Above ground utilities are unsightly, impede pedestrian traffic, and block strategic views. They also constitute a hazard in certain locations where balconies extend over the sidewalk.





Above: Before and after views of improvements on Budleigh St. (Green Dolphin)
Below: Traffic calming on Budleigh St.
Images: J. Robbins



Plan showing proposed new Post Office and Town Hall Drawing: J. Robbins

DESIGN PROPOSALS

- Completion of the pedestrian circulation system and the improvement of streetscapes (lighting, planting, benches, sidewalks).
- Location/relocation of the post office or branch post office, in conjunction with the establishment of a new or redeveloped central service/business district.
- Identification of sites for the development of appropriate mixed-use senior housing/ assisted living/office/retail and establishment of a program to sponsor/encourage their construction.
- Adaptive reuse of the courthouse with a new park on the site of the former jail structure.
- Creation of an historic overlay zone covering most of downtown to encourage the addition of appropriate designs and uses.



- Pursue grants to place utilities underground.
- Creation of a system of semi-public pocket parks and pedestrian alleys and walkways along an enhanced and maintained stormwater drainage system.

THE WATERFRONT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Manteo waterfront is located on Shallowbag Bay at the edge of downtown Manteo facing the barrier islands to the east. The bay feeds into Roanoke Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Water is a major element of the cultural language of Manteo from its heritage to its daily livelihood and recreation. Picturesque marsh and trees surround the waterfront and the prominent vegetation around the boardwalk is the live oak (*Quercus virginiana*). The existing Manteo waterfront has evolved into a multipurpose development with residences, businesses and recreation, thus functioning as a node of activity. Recreation includes the boardwalk, swimming, sailing and kayak tours of Roanoke Sound, dolphin watching, fishing trips, the children’s park, indoor restaurants, and shopping. The boardwalk runs through the marshes at the southern end of town, past the Maritime Museum and the newly rebuilt Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse to downtown Manteo and boasts a long pier, a covered gazebo and docks with seating along the way. At the northern end it connects to the Cora Mae Daniels Basnight Bridge, which leads to Festival Park where the Elizabeth II, a reproduction of a 1585 ship similar to that sailed by Sir Walter Raleigh’s colonists to Roanoke Island, is docked in view of the boardwalk and Queen Elizabeth Street.

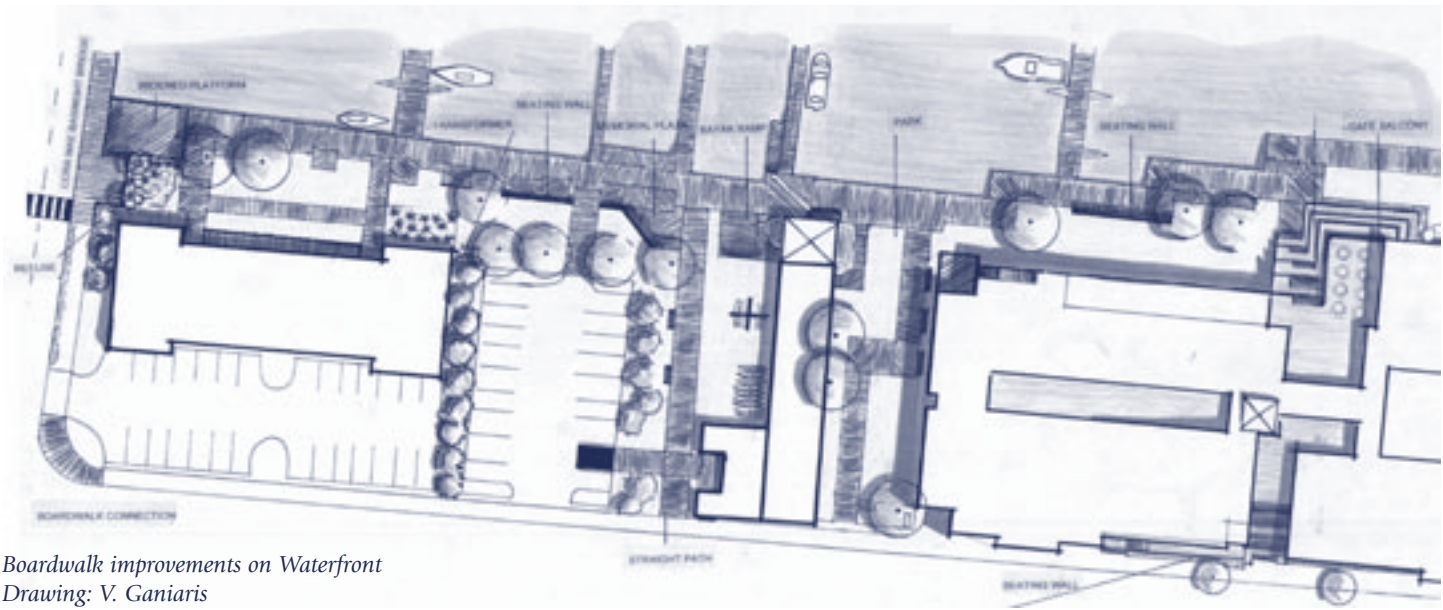
Five entryways connect the existing boardwalk to downtown Manteo. They are (1) through a parking lot at the southern end near the newly reconstructed Roanoke Marshes Lighthouse, (2) through the Waterfront Shops (up a set of stairs to a view of the bay and back down to the boardwalk), (3) through a vacant lot opposite the end of Sir Walter Raleigh Street , (4) through the parking lot

at the foot of Budleigh Street, and (5) at the foot of the Cora Mae Daniels Basnight Bridge and the Tranquil House Inn.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- A visual disconnection exists between downtown Manteo and the waterfront. The existing connection is less obvious to the visitor than to longtime residents.
- The major entryway experience at the Waterfront Shops is poorly designed and confusing. Vegetation is limited in the entryways and on the waterfront.
- The survey and interviews elicited complaints from both the commercial sector and from residents that the planting of wax myrtles and pines has blocked views to the water. Further, the boardwalk is not accessible to handicapped people, and negotiating between the parking facilities and the stores is difficult and confusing.
- The construction of the new lighthouse adjacent to the boardwalk will necessitate better public access.
- The only visible entrance to the waterfront is the lot at the intersection of Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth streets.
- The nature play equipment at the waterfront park is not in character with the theme and style of development. When the existing play equipment requires replacement,

View of Manteo waterfront and Salty Dawg property Photo: D. Stein



Boardwalk improvements on Waterfront Drawing: V. Ganiaris

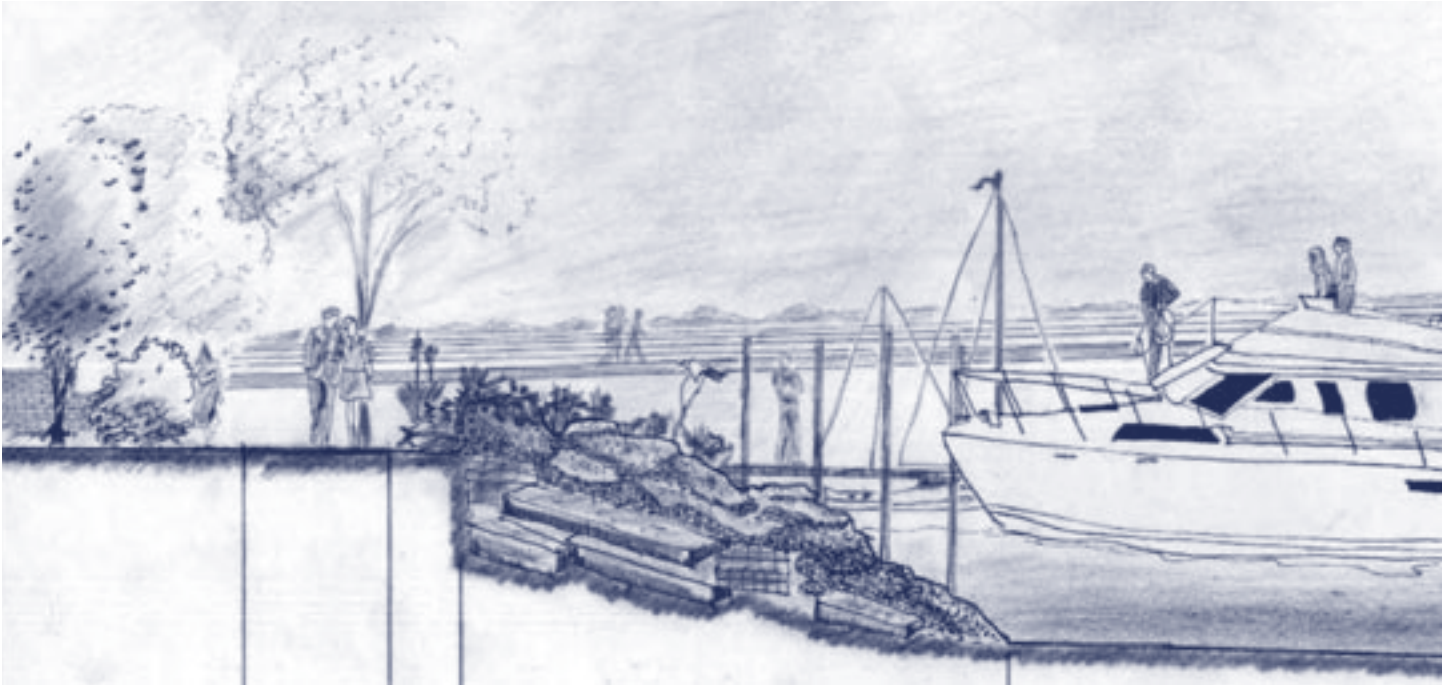
- new structures and materials more in keeping with the waterfront should be used. Equipment should appeal to a wider range of age groups.
- The purchase of the Salty Dawg property for a new housing development with a hotel will provide the town with an opportunity to extend the public boardwalk all the way to the marina.
- The community has expressed a desire for a public beach. Manteo’s only current access to swimming is private, with the exception of the traditional jump-off from the bridge that marks a rite of passage for the town youth.

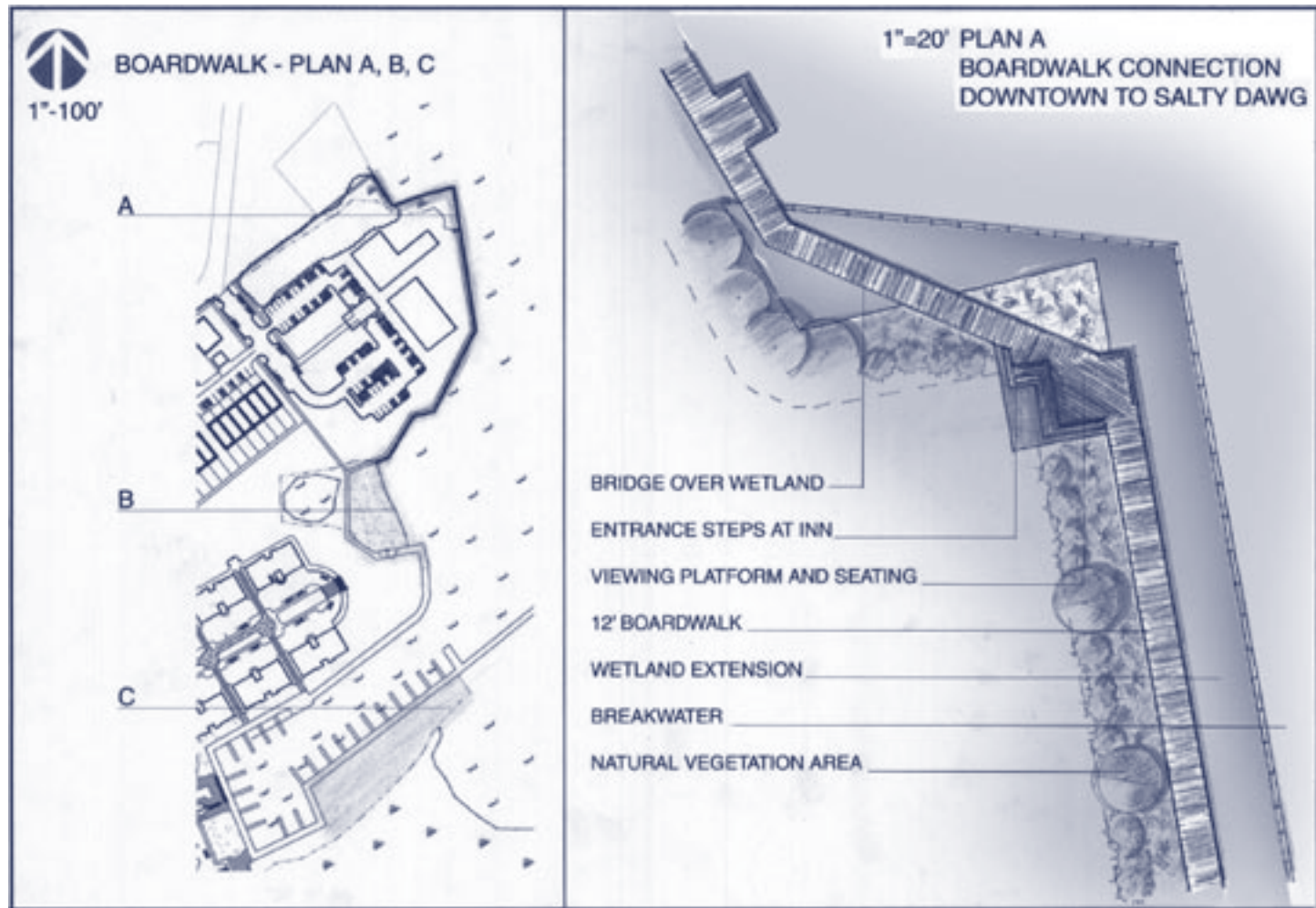
- Vendors and additional commerce could be added at suitable locations along the proposed extension of the boardwalk and at the points memorializing the town’s past.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

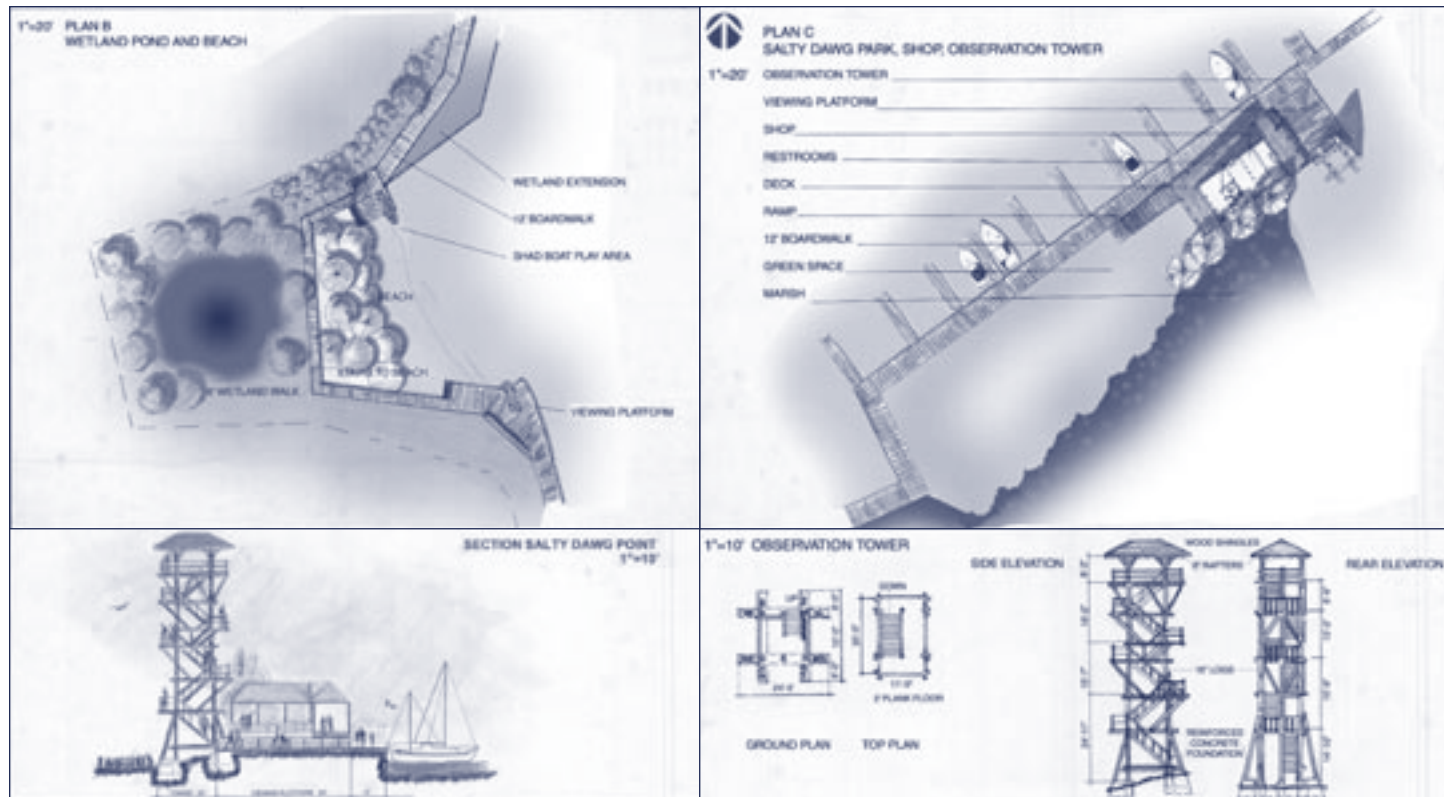
- Restore and upgrade the water’s edge to maintain water quality and its aesthetic appearance.
- Extend the boardwalk to include future development and additional activity nodes, including to and through the Salty Dawg property for public access to the waterfront.
- Acquire the privately owned open space at the foot of Sir

Reconstruction of water’s edge Drawing: V. Ganiaris

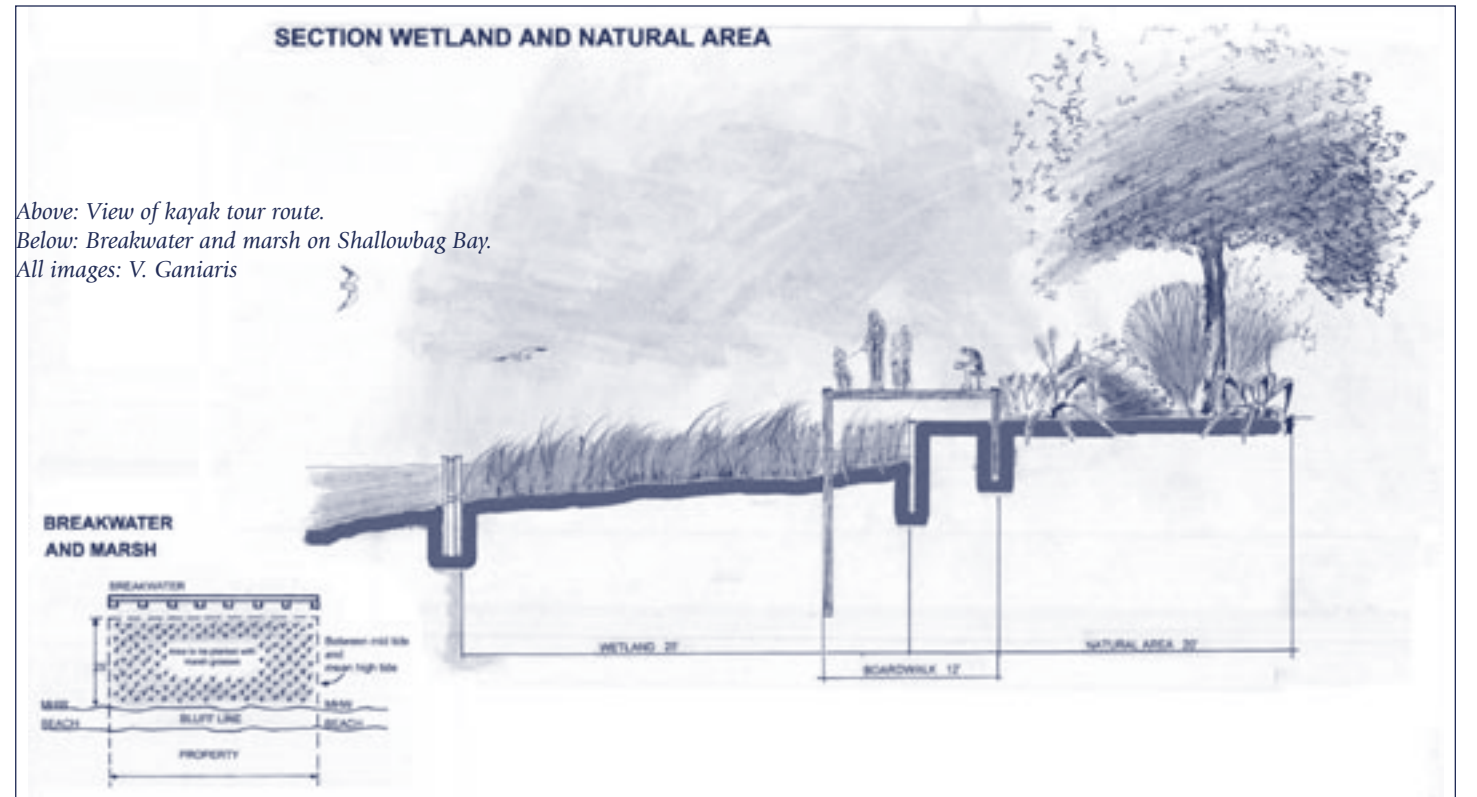
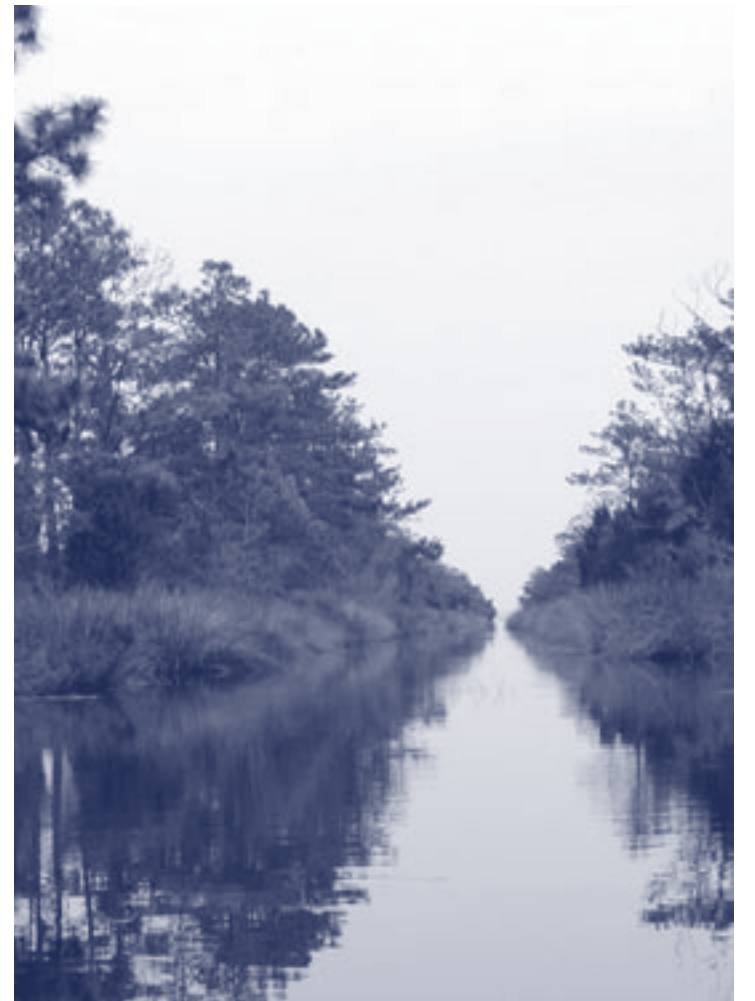




Above: Boardwalk Extension on Salty Dawg property; Below: Boardwalk extension and observation tower.



- Walter Raleigh St, to preserve the visual connection to the waterfront and the view of the Elizabeth II.
- Limit erosion in accordance with sound practice and CAMA regulations.
 - Tie the waterfront to the Maritime Village tour by installing five pieces of art commemorating the Native Americans and the Lost Colony settlers, the old departure point and other events connected to the town's history.
 - Create a new beach in the vicinity of the Salty Dawg wetlands, accessible from the boardwalk.
 - Adjust the access points to the boardwalk to comply with universal design requirements permitting easy access for people of all levels of physical mobility.
 - Redesign Bicentennial Park including the planted areas and the seating area near the kayak rental site.
 - Develop a kayak tour route and build a better launching point.
 - Create a nature viewing destination station at the end of the boardwalk at Salty Dawg.
 - Preserve the natural shoreline and natural drainage patterns.
 - Use native vegetation.



Above: View of kayak tour route.
Below: Breakwater and marsh on Shallowbag Bay.
All images: V. Ganiaris

COLLEGE OF THE ALBEMARLE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

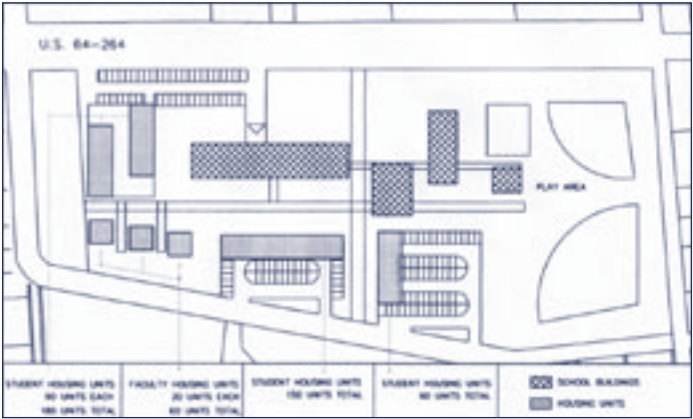
The college is currently located in facilities near Midway that are both difficult to access due to poor road layout and undersized for the population it handles. Proposals have been made to find an additional location so that the college community of faculty, students and visitors could add to the social and commercial vitality of the community. It is proposed to relocate the college to the site of the present Manteo Middle School when that is vacated by the construction of a new facility now in the planning stages.

This present middle school site consists of a number of out-dated classroom buildings and a gym. Relocating the college to this site will require extensive remodeling and reconstruction to make them suitable for use as a college. However, the site offers an excellent connection to the core area of town and to the commercial area along the Main Highway. This location would permit the college to become a secondary focus and an additional center of activity for the town.

ISSUES

- There is a need to integrate development of the new college campus with the reconstruction of the Main Highway and the new Salty Dawg development, including provision of continuous access to waterfront and downtown along the boardwalk.
- There is a need for both student and faculty housing. The college should serve as a year-round conference center, as well as a summer home for students from

Campus plan

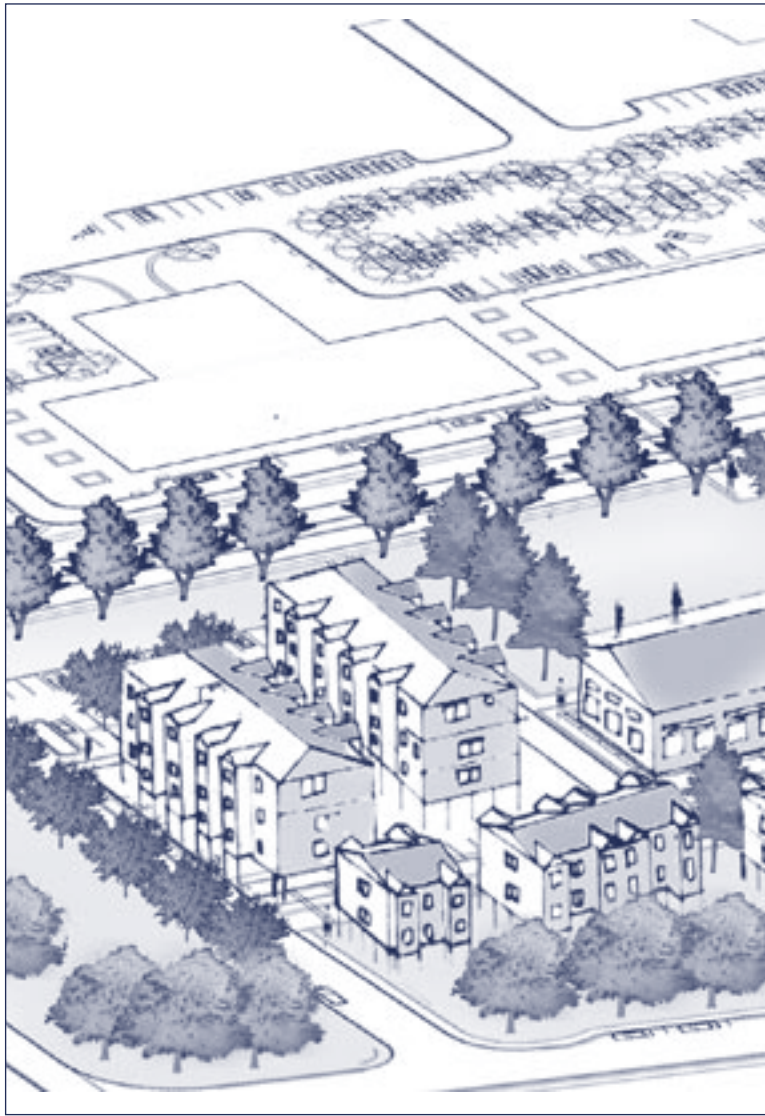


- throughout the community college system enrolled in the new marine environment program.
- There is a need to integrate the design and planning of the college with the commercial development along the Main Highway and with the new development on the Salty Dawg property for economic reasons as well as to reduce potential sprawling of the commercial district.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

- Adapt the existing middle school buildings and add additional necessary and appropriate classrooms in order to help the college become a leader in its field.
- Add year round housing facilities for faculty and students in addition to seminar rooms to facilitate summer conferences and special summer programs for

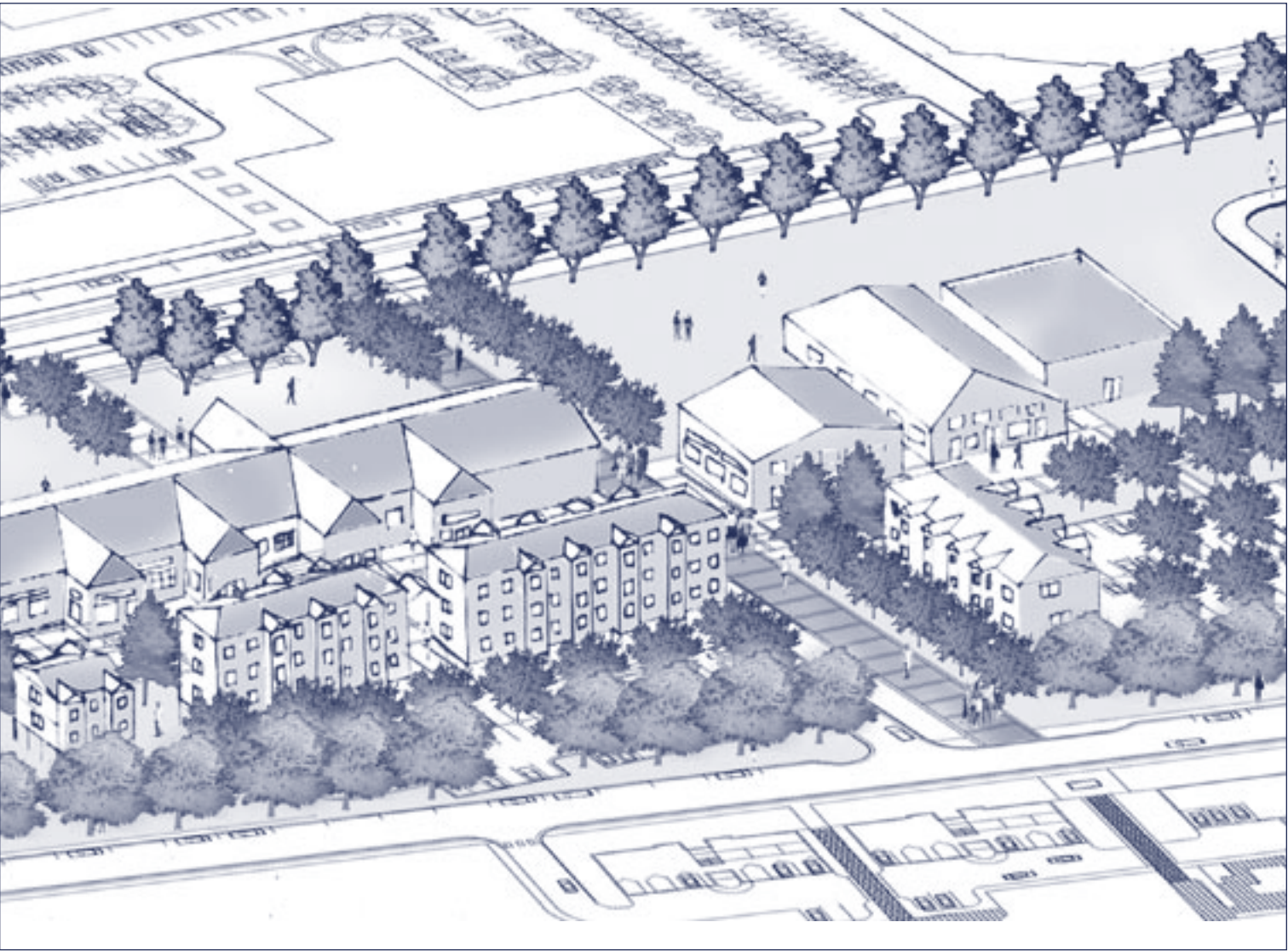
College of the Albemarle showing student and faculty Housing
Drawing: J. Turner



- students from the entire N.C. university system
- Apply the proposed scale and design standards to all new buildings and establish internal parking to bring the college closer to the street.
 - Design the site and the new college buildings to provide visual and physical connections to the water from the commercial district along the Main Highway.
 - Consider use of parking facilities for joint use with town for overflow parking during summer months when the college is not in session.
 - Maintain the town ball field on the campus site for use by town residents.
 - Provide planting and outdoor amenities to create an appropriate campus environment adapted to the needs of the college and responsive to the particular local conditions.



View of Existing Manteo Middle School Photo: D. Stein



VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOODS IMPROVEMENTS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The historic, small town of Manteo provides a unique view into the history of both the first colonization of America and of the establishment of America's first Freedmen's colony. Unfortunately, there is little awareness of the history and importance of the Freedmen's Colony, a fact that should be rectified and brought to the attention of both citizens and visitors.

The historical traces of the Freedmen's colony are located west of the Main Highway just outside the town limits. They are effectively separated from what is popularly thought of as historic Manteo by the highway. While the area seems to the casual observer to be relatively homogenous, only a small portion of the traditional African-American neighborhood has been incorporated into Manteo.

Many of the single-family residences and the yards in the west side appear to be poorly maintained, which may be due in part to a lack of financial resources.

The roadways/sidewalks in the area are in need of repair. Lighting in the neighborhood is inconsistent and poorly designed. Many of the streets are currently cul-de-sacs, and there is a lack of direct connections to the Main Highway and the downtown.

There is a moderate-income senior housing project, which was built in 1987. The layout is spacious and the housing itself seems satisfactory. However, the grounds are mostly in turf with very few woody plants, giving a exposed appearance which is not in keeping with the "Manteo Style".

Adjacent to Lucy's Corner is a community center with a child-care facility and a park on the site adjacent to Lucy's Corner. However, the recreational facilities are inadequate and in need of maintenance, and the open space needs to be redesigned and refurbished.

There are mature trees and many vacant lots that contain typical marine forest vegetation in the process of reestablishing

itself. The old canals and drainage ditches still criss-cross the area leading to the sound, although their waters are now stagnant and polluted.

ISSUES

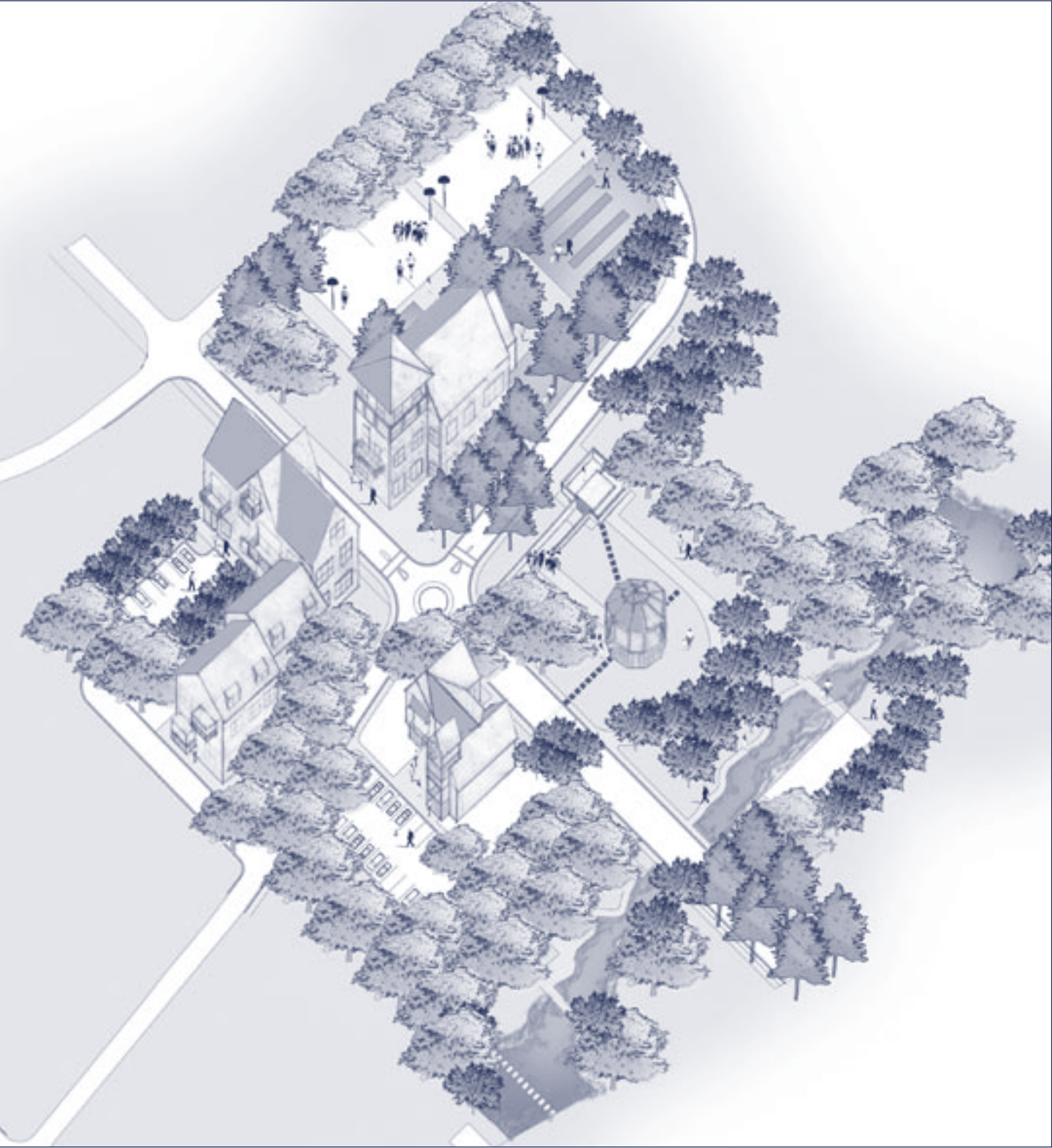
- There is a paramount need to unite the east and the west sides of the town.
- There is a need to interpret and commemorate the Freedmen's Colony within the neighborhood by creating appropriate memorials and by preserving historical properties.
- There is a need to accentuate the West Side through the development of a program that includes all of the elements of the town working together with county, state, and federal agencies to create an awareness and celebration of its history.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

- Create roundabout at the intersection of Bideford and Sir Walter Raleigh streets at Lucy's Corner.
- Connect existing roadways and dead-end roads to existing ones for better accessibility. Link Agona Street to Bideford Street, and Burnside Road to California Lane.
- Maintain and improve all roads by adding sidewalks and vegetation to main circulation routes and establish clear, defined and well-lit pedestrian access at the most needed areas.
- Create an awareness of the history of the Village Neighborhoods district, including the AME Zion Church and the Freedmen's Colony through public programs and interpretive signage.
- Redesign and improve Cartwright Park with picnic areas, and refurbish the site for gatherings and performances.
- Refurbish and improve existing play equipment.
- Upgrade existing basketball court and add another court to meet existing demand.
- Design and enable/assist construction of a privately/nonprofit owned community cultural center to serve as an historical focal point and tourist destination as part of the town's recreation program
- Establish a new, fully equipped senior center at Lucy's Corner with adequate parking. The center should be designed and operated for use by the entire town.

- Work with Dare County to develop a demonstration of an integrated on-site storm water management and multi-use recreation area by enlarging the existing canal to hold more water and edging the channel with a trail, seating areas, bridges, and a changeable outdoor exhibition area.
- Encourage the owner on the southwest side of Lucy's Corner to consider the development of the property for additional reasonably priced homes. The site is suitable for 18 units with parking with open space for passive use.

Lucy's Corner development – view looking toward Community Center A. Stein / H. Hesselein



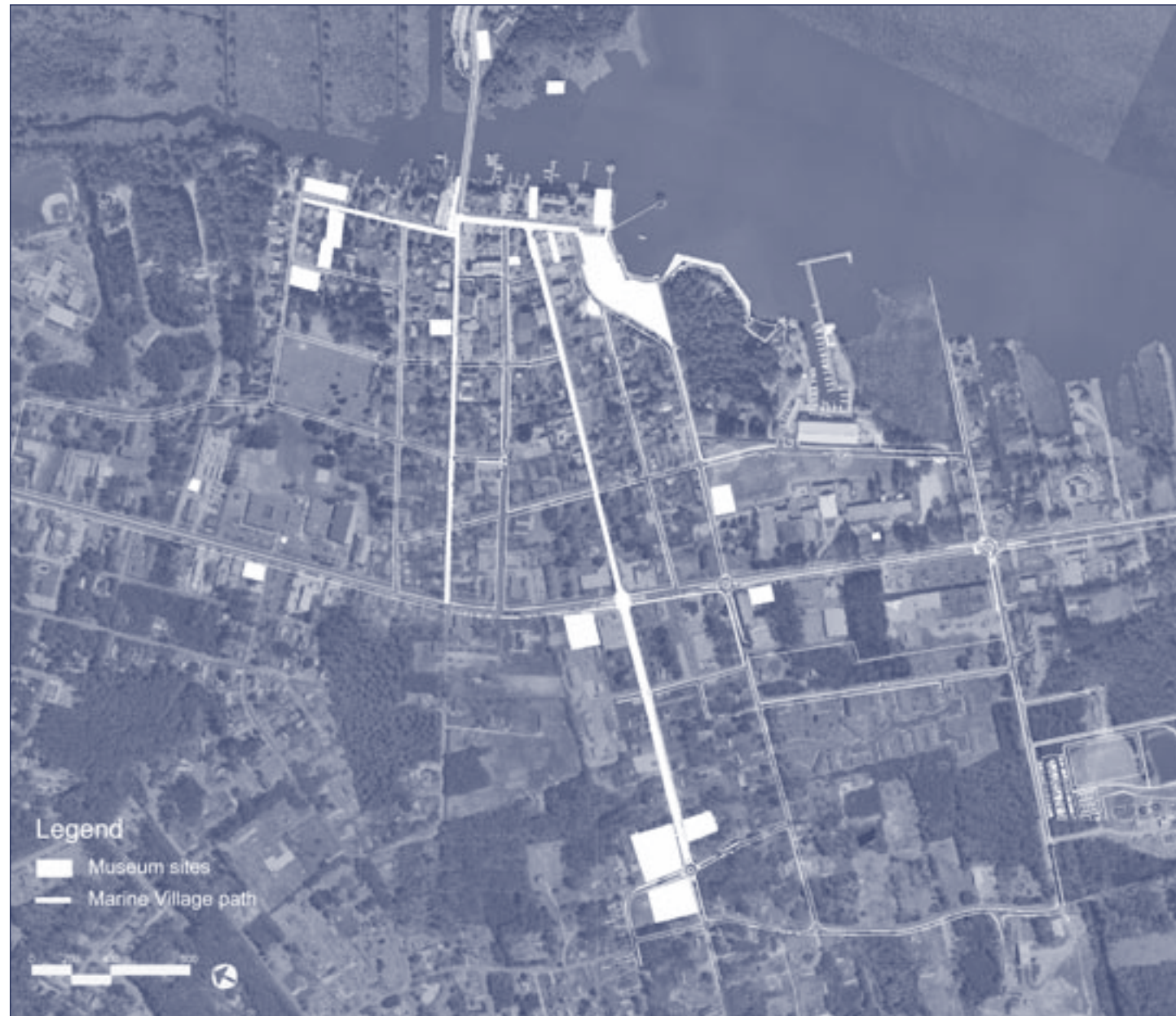
MARITIME VILLAGE OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

ISSUES

The proposed Maritime Village in Manteo is designed to provide an educational experience through the exhibition of artifacts and activities related to the islands maritime past in a coherent manner along points of interest throughout the town.

The intent of an open-air maritime museum is to reveal the maritime history of Manteo as part everyday life through the use of pocket parks and exhibits of boats,

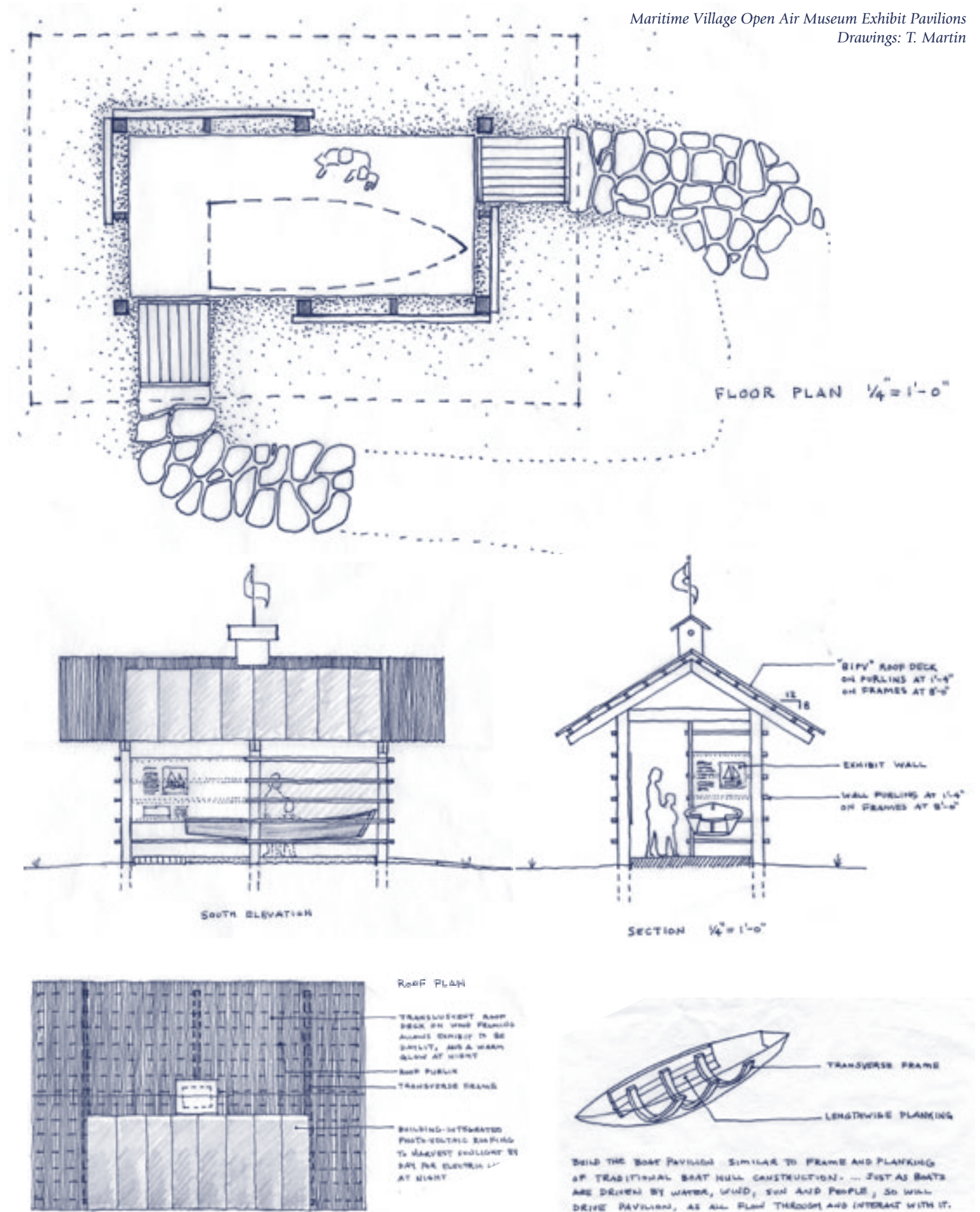
Maritime Village Open Air Museum showing location of exhibits *Image: M. Emamifar*

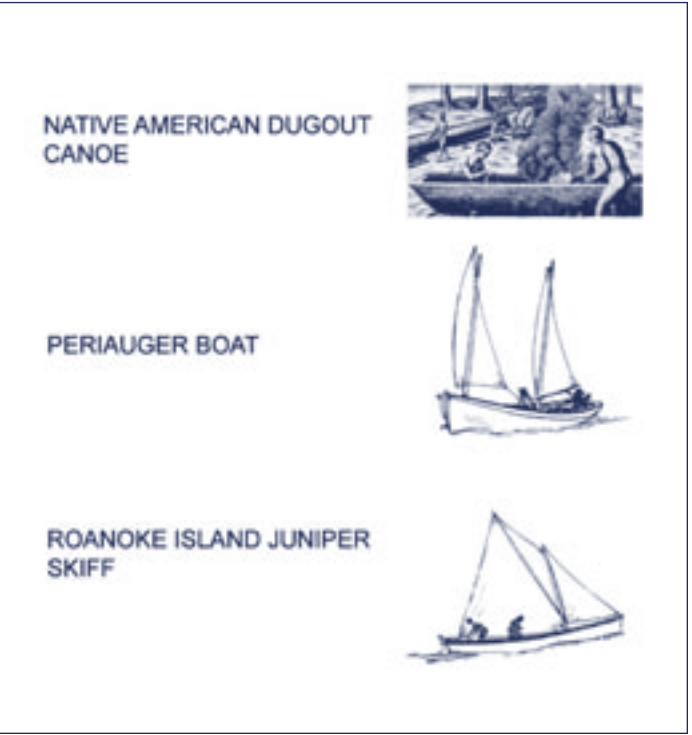
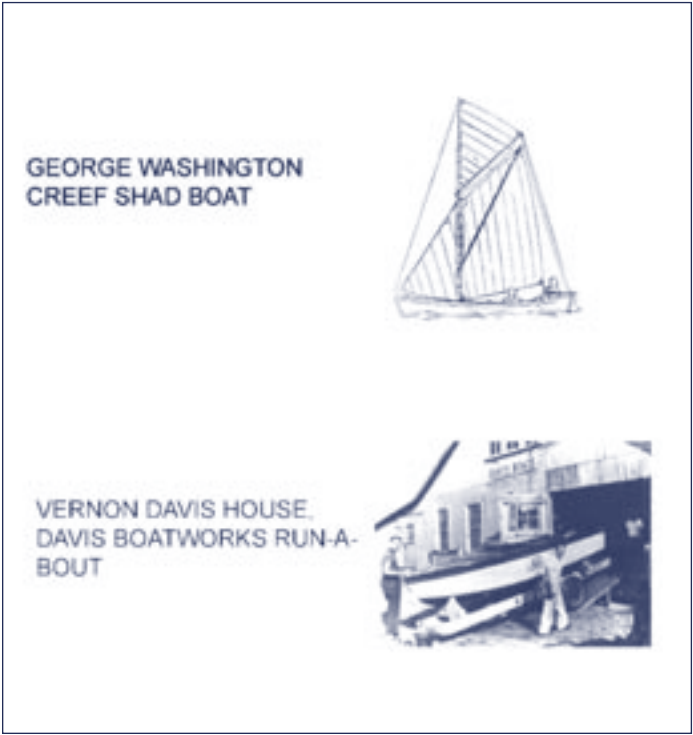


sculptures and plants native to the region. Various aspects and components of the open-air museum will

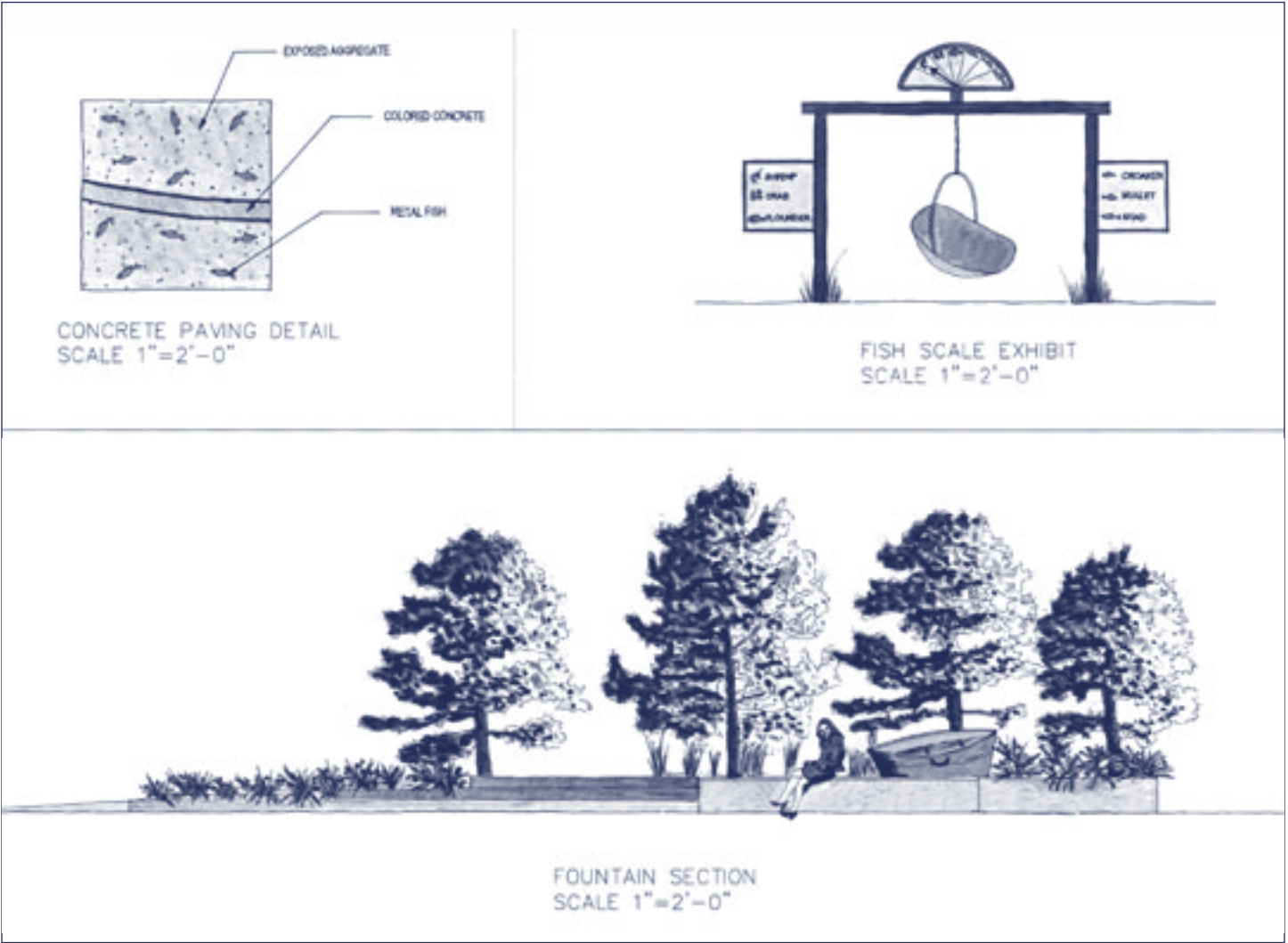
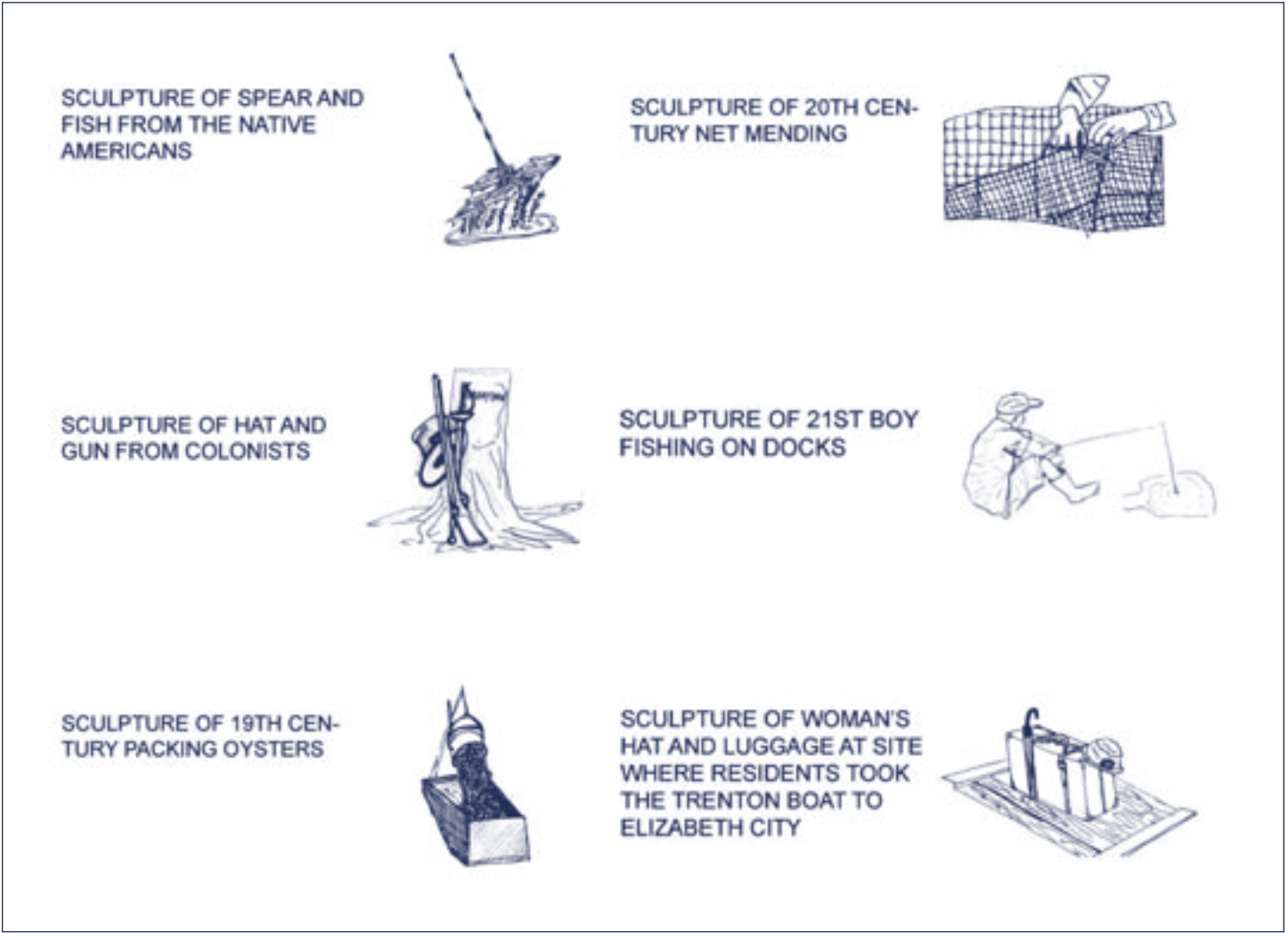
be developed cooperatively through the tri-party agreement between the Town of Manteo, the North Carolina Maritime Museum, and the Roanoke Island Commission. This multi-layered approach will enhance the significance of the open space while providing additional activity—historical, educational, and cultural activities throughout the year. In addition this maritime trail through the town will connect the open spaces to existing institutional and commercial sites, thereby promoting activities throughout the year.

Maritime Village Open Air Museum Exhibit Pavilions
Drawings: T. Martin





Maritime Village Open Air Museum Proposed Exhibits Images: T. Martin



Reconstructed Intersection Park at Queen Elizabeth and Ananais Dare Images: T. Martin

DESIGN PROPOSALS

- Create a self-guided walking tour to the maritime village listing exhibits as well as educational activities using bold graphics and virtual materials.
- Establish agreements with private and public institutions to acquire and locate boats for exhibition.
- Create a kiosk/shelter area for the boats and other exhibits designed to become landmarks and orientation devices as well as educational points along the maritime trail.
- Select artifacts depicting historical events and place them in prominent positions.
- Create and locate graphic information explaining the natural plant and wildlife communities in the town and on the waterfront.
- Create a graphic and Internet presence for the maritime village.

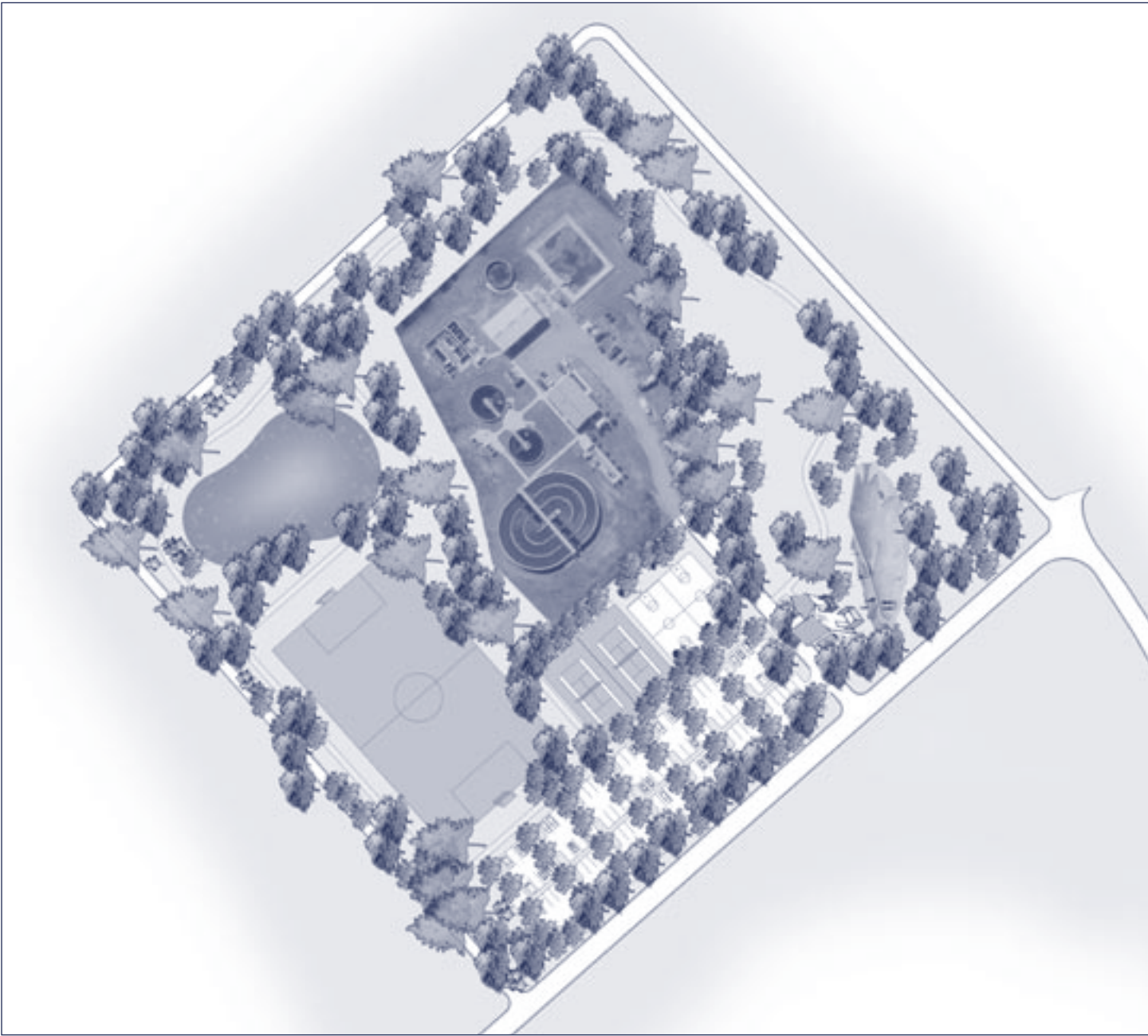
- Explore grant opportunities to commission exhibits and works of art to be located throughout the town depicting maritime history and culture, to be located at sites along the self-guided tour throughout the town.

OPEN SPACE AND STORMWATER

RECREATIONAL ELEMENTS

Open space in town and in close proximity provides people with physical, mental and emotional refreshment. Planning for natural resources within the town cannot be separated from the wider effort of planning for open space for Roanoke Island. This plan, therefore deals only with utilizing opportunities to manage urban runoff, to meet the town’s recreational needs and to develop a coordinated planting scheme for the town.

Youth Sports Park at Water Treatment site A. Stein / H. Hesselein



The rate of disappearance of the marine forest vegetation resulting from the development of housing, commercial areas and infrastructure has reached an acute state. Climatic disasters and the use of inappropriate varieties of trees have led to a situation in which there are few remaining mature hardwood trees in town. Even the pecan trees that formerly dominated the skyline proved vulnerable to Hurricane Isabel. This situation has a significant impact on the quality of life.

The inventory of existing parks indicates that there is a shortage of usable park land for the current population. The cost

of existing vacant parcels, together with the severe shortage of housing will make this situation even more pronounced in the future. School facilities are less able to accommodate open recreation due to the shortage of playing fields, while safety issues are frequently raised when recreation activity is suggested for the open space in the Village Neighborhoods.

Young people of all ages in Manteo have very few opportunities for active recreation outside of their homes. Thus, the group recreation experience is lacking except for “hanging out” downtown. Even there, boys on skateboards dominate the activities. On the other end of the scale, there are no places for seniors to congregate or engage in active recreation.

PARK AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Storm flooding and urban runoff in Manteo contribute to the reduction of water quality, which in turn affects the entire ecosystem of the island. The town undertook a comprehensive study of water management that resulted in the 2000 Stormwater Management Plan. This report provided the town with a thorough “analysis of current storm manage-

ment processes impacting the town”. The report identified deficiencies and provided recommendations “to develop the appropriate policies and regulations needed to manage storm water runoff in the future.” The report stressed that best management practices (BMPs) are a major component of all management practice today, and noted that “with thoughtful site design, regular maintenance, and creative landscape design, most BMPs can be not only efficient and utilitarian but also attractive to the community.”

The stormwater management study on water quality in the town of Manteo indicates that non-point sources such as urban runoff and failing septic systems along with discharges from marinas are the major cause of impairment for Roanoke Sound and Shallowbag Bay. Flooding from stormwater runoff is particularly significant in the downtown area. The report further recommends that “in order to achieve water quality goals for urban runoff, all stormwater runoff resulting from the first one inch of rainfall shall be retained on any public or private commercial or multi-family site. The runoff shall be captured and infiltrated or otherwise managed and released on site...in accordance

53 Conceptual solution to Mini Park location and Stormwater management system Image: E. Westbrook



with appropriate design and construction practices and the storm water management plan.” (Policies VI-3)

ISSUES

- There is a need to identify, evaluate and prioritize all the natural and cultural resources into a coherent open space plan.
- The open space plan should be regularly assessed in relation to the growth of the town and changing recreational demands.
- There is a lack of accessible direct connections to natural undeveloped land.
- The system of drainage channels has been abandoned and the ditches have been filled with debris or are otherwise out of service from clogging.
- There is a lack of parcels on the east side of town available for public purchase.
- The system trails is incomplete and lacks coordinated development of a multi-use approach for hiking, cycling and equestrian use and/or safe, continuous bicycle lanes.
- Development of gated communities discourages links to their public facilities or access through the development.
- There are no pocket parks in the downtown core or along major pedestrian routes.
- There is inadequate access for physically handicapped persons to the recreational and natural areas in the town.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recreation:*
- Create a sports park on the site adjacent to the wastewater treatment facility that includes active recreational opportunities including tennis courts, basketball courts, a football and/or soccer field, a youth center and swimming pool, picnic sites and a demonstration wastewater recycling site. This park should be surrounded by a belt of marine forest and accessible by foot and bicycle trail as well as by car.
 - Integrate the Maritime Village exhibits into all pocket parks and the waterfront to establish links between the cultural and natural resources.
 - Protect, enhance and implement a program of rehabilitation of historic sites.
 - Encourage and provide training for guides who will be involved with the educational opportunities associated with open space resources, both cultural and natural,

- especially those in areas with high tourist volumes.
- Implement universal design standards in all recreational areas and maintain adequate handicapped access for all recreational and natural resources.

Conservation:

- Encourage the dedication of land as permanent natural areas by private citizens.
- Protect scenic areas and the visual connection to water and forested areas.
- Use native and appropriate plant materials instead of high maintenance exotics.
- Educate and encourage the town to create a public planting scheme that is differentiated from the domestic horticulture of private properties.
- Work with all relevant state resources to establish a list of drought-tolerant and low-maintenance plants to be used by housing developments and concentrate on suitable canopy trees as opposed to shrubs and turf.
- Work with NC Department of Transportation and the Roanoke Voyages Corridor to complete the US 64 and US 64 Bypass street plantings from the Virginia Dare Memorial Bridge to Midway and north to the planted avenue of oaks on the North End of Roanoke Island.
- Street trees within the town should be planted judiciously to avoid a generic appearance to the downtown.
- Utilize the new roundabouts for concentrated plantings.
- Link all the recreational activities to one another and to the storm-drain management plan.
- Create pocket parks for passive recreation and incorporate retention ponds in their design.
- Create and maintain urban runoff bioswales to enhance groundwater recharge.
- Rehabilitate important water channels to the sound in collaboration with the county and provide access points for Manteo residents, including public canoe/kayak launching areas, parking spaces and walkways to and along the water’s edge.

